

Victrola and 78 Journal

Issue 9

Summer 1996

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One Steps
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Song Hits*



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Three Records
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Here are four CDs reviewed in this issue of V78J.

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VICTROLA AND 78 JOURNAL

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Brunswick Enters The Phonograph Field

By R. J. Wakeman

However large Brunswick phonographs and records and the Brunswick "sound" may loom in our minds, at no time during the fourteen years that Brunswick manufactured phonographs and the ten years it made and sold records were these the main products produced by the Brunswick-Balke-Collender Company. Despite this, by 1921 Brunswick passed Edison in production of phonographs and records, making Victor, Columbia, and Brunswick the big three U.S. phonograph companies. Brunswick was and is better known in the business community as the nation's oldest and largest manu-

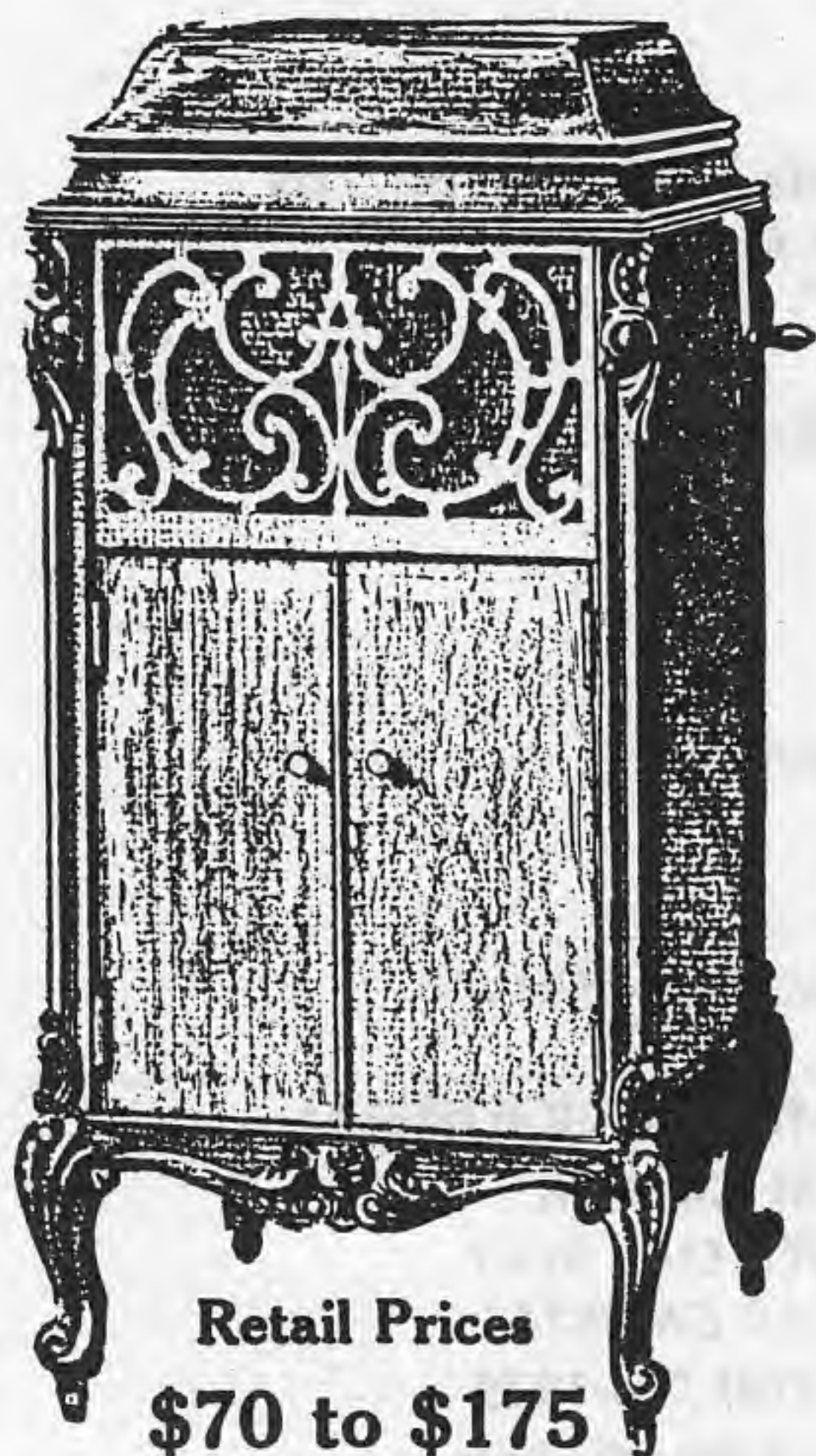
facturer of recreation products. Its commercial successes in billiard and bowling products enabled Brunswick to diversify into manufacturing phonographs, records, radios, and in recent times marine, defense, and aerospace products.

The Brunswick Company was founded in 1845 by John Moses Brunswick. Very few American businesses date that far back. For most of the 19th century the company was a family business, owned entirely by the Brunswick and Bensinger families. John Brunswick had two goals: to make the best products possible (he was quoted as saying, "If it is wood, we can make it, and we can make it better than anyone else") and to diversify production lines to counteract fluctuations in business cycles.

John Brunswick

John Moses Brunswick was born in Bremgarten, Switzerland on October 16, 1819. When he was not yet 15 he emigrated to America, sailing in 1834 from Bremen in a tall sailing ship with other emigrants. The crossing was difficult and took 40 days, according to Rick Kogan's 1995 Brunswick: The Story of an American Company, an in-house Brunswick publication.

In Philadelphia young John Brunswick worked for a carriage maker and learned the carriage trade. In nearby Harrisburg he married 17-year old Louisa Greiner and, in 1840, they moved to Cincinnati, Ohio. On September 15, 1845 John opened his own carriage shop. When there was no carriage business, John and his men made other wood products. John recognized a market for finely crafted billiard tables and soon made these. When orders came from as far away as New Orleans and Chicago, he expanded production and sent for his four half-brothers in Switzerland. The Brunswick brothers opened a sales office, another small factory, and a billiard parlor in Chicago. In 1866 the brothers formed



Retail Prices
\$70 to \$175

An early Brunswick as advertised in the March 1917 issue of The Talking Machine World. The trade publication advertised Brunswick machines beginning in June 1916. Wider national advertising began in July 1916.

the J. M. Brunswick & Brothers Company.

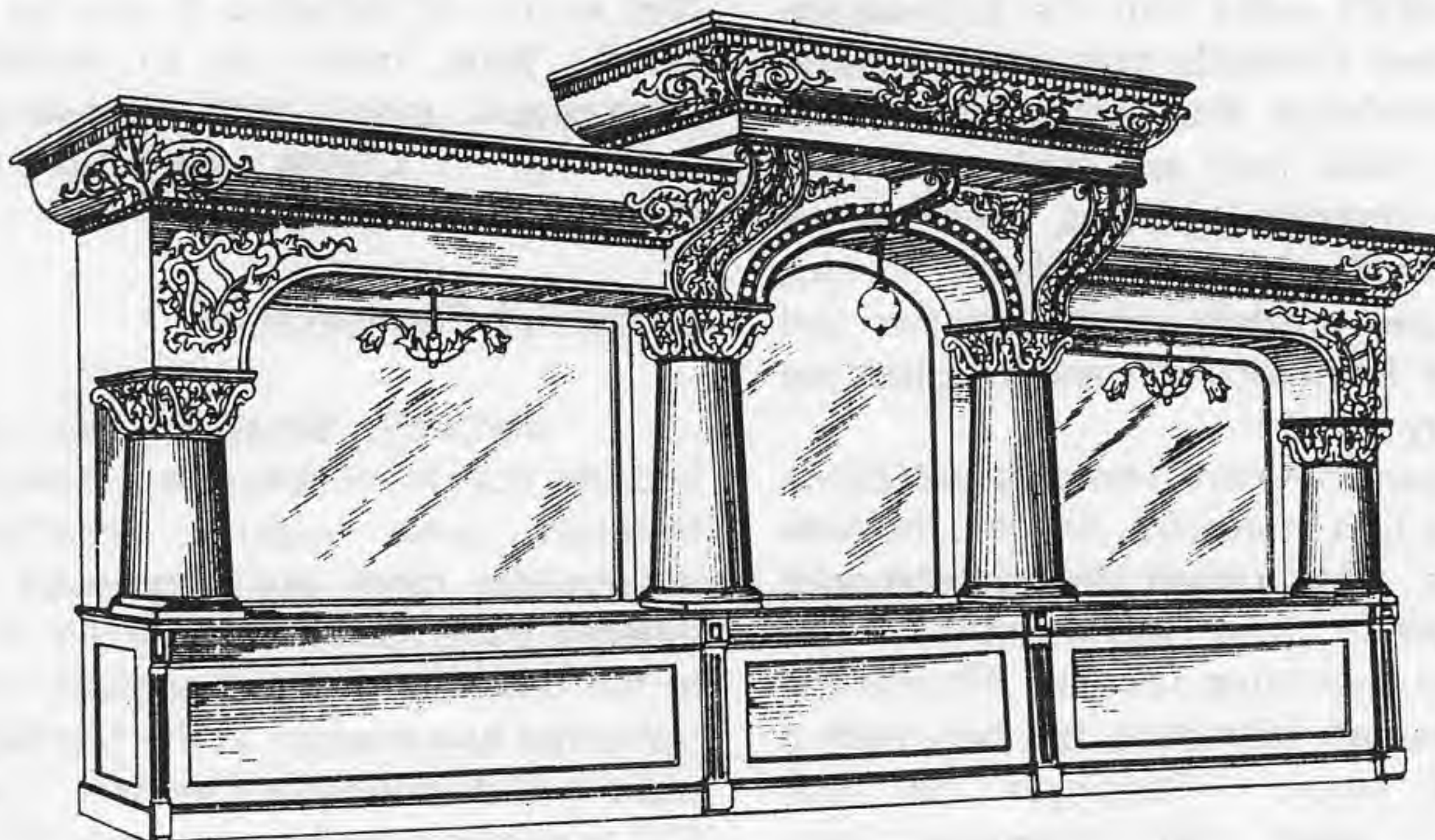
By 1869 Brunswick's main competitor for the midwest billiard market was Julius Balke's Great Western Billiard Manufactory of Cincinnati. In the east it was the Phelan and Collender Company of New York. With help from his new son-in-law Moses Bensinger, John Brunswick negotiated with Julius Balke and in 1873 the companies merged, forming the J.M. Brunswick and Balke Company. In 1879, after Michael Phelan died, Hugh W. Collender merged with Brunswick and Balke. This formed the world's largest billiard equipment company. In 1884 they formed the now familiar Brunswick-Balke-Collender Company and issued stock. A board of directors was formed. Incorporation was in Ohio.

Increasingly Moses Bensinger took over the daily operations of the fast-expanding company. Two of John Brunswick's sons had died tragically as youths. On July 23, 1886, John Brunswick suffered a heart attack and died two days later. Hugh W. Collender took over as president of the firm, but when he died in 1890, Moses Bensinger led the company.

In the 1880's Bensinger moved his family to Chicago where the Brunswick company was building two new factories. One was eight stories high and covered an entire city block north of the Chicago River. This building became familiar to Chicago residents as "The Brunswick Building." The main offices of the company were located at 623 South Wabash Avenue in Chicago. Though Balke's son, Julius Jr., and John Brunswick's youngest son, Benedict Henry, became Brunswick executives, neither played a major role in guiding the company. Through the 1890's Moses Bensinger groomed his son Benjamin to be the most likely heir to the company.

Benjamin Bensinger

When Moses Bensinger died on October 15, 1904, Benjamin Bensinger assumed the presidency of the Brunswick-Balke-Collender Company, a large and prosperous firm with sales offices in several American cities and in Canada and Mexico. Brunswick factories were located in Cincinnati, Dubuque, Chicago, and New York.



Brunswick wood workers made exquisite front and back bars, but due to a growing temperance movement, in the mid-'teens company executives investigated markets for other wood products. Phonograph cabinets were in demand. Brunswick soon made them for Edison and others.

PATHE RECORDS FOR BRUNSWICK DEALERS

With each Brunswick agency we give a Pathe agency. In our advertising, we encourage people to play Pathe records on The Brunswick, as we have found this to be the ideal combination. Of course, they may play any other record if they wish,



but the Pathe library is so large and so complete that Brunswick owners may select all their records from you. Pathe is also carrying on an extensive campaign advertising its records.

All these details we explain in our Dealers' Proposition.

Benjamin Bensinger immediately made plans for a factory in Muskegon, Michigan. With its own boats, the company could send lumber directly from its mill at Big Bay, Michigan, to the Muskegon factory. The wood came from the 1,000 plus acres of hardwood forests that the company owned near Lake Superior. The new 100,000 square-foot plant opened in Muskegon on October 15, 1906.

In 1909 the Brunswick Company changed its incorporation to the state of Delaware, according to Moody's Industrial Manual.

Making Phonograph Cabinets For Others

Brunswick's entry into the phonograph business stemmed indirectly from manufacturing bars and bar furnishings. Brunswick craftsmen and wood workers made front and back bars. The back bars were amazing structures, often massive and imposing with rich woods, large mirrors, stained glass, and ornately carved cornices and columns. Many Brunswick bars and back bars are still in use today.

A movement in America towards prohibition and temperance hurt Brunswick. In 1906 the Anti-Saloon League was formed by prohibitionist preachers, teachers, and businessmen. The movement grew, becoming national. Billiards and bowling had enough detractors, but bars were a more obvious target. Bensinger cut back production of large and expensive bars. Fortunately Brunswick still had a steady market for its refrigerators, church furniture and interior wood trim for banks, restaurants, and commercial buildings.

Benjamin Bensinger looked for other ways to use the men and machines idled by a reduction of the bar furnishings business. He considered many ideas, from an expansion of the company's furniture line to building wood frames for pianos and automobile bodies. He asked sales workers to study newspaper advertisements for popular selling items. Ultimately selected was the phonograph cabinet.

With a dance craze sweeping the land, phonographs and records were selling well. Phonographs by this time were largely sold on the basis of cabinet style and quality. Cabinets were the most difficult part of a phonograph to make. Brunswick asked major phonograph companies if they would be interested in bids on phonograph cases. Soon, orders for \$1 million worth of phonograph cases kept Brunswick factories humming. Clients included the Edison Phonograph Company.

Brunswick Phonographs

Benjamin Bensinger was not content because, from his perspective, it seemed Brunswick factories were making excellent quality phonograph cases but they were sold under different trade names. Feeling this was an affront to the traditions of the Brunswick company, he instructed two workers at the Muskegon plant to make two demonstration models. He gave them \$50 to purchase the hardware needed to complete the machines. They were ready by April 3, 1916. Brunswick executives were pleased with the new products, according to Kogan's Brunswick: The Story of an American Company.

The story that Brunswick began making phonographs because the Edison Company refused a shipment of cabinets from Brunswick is told in Oliver Read and Walter L. Welch's From Tinfoil To Stereo. Brunswick expected the phonograph cabinet contract with Edison not to be renewed and executives decided to manufacture two styles of Brunswick phonographs. The plan became official on April 20. As quoted in Kogan's book, a press release announced,

"This is an advance notice of our intention to put a high-grade phonograph on the market. Samples together with advertising matter will be ready inside of sixty days...Our best quality machine, which will compare favorably with any high-grade machine on the market sold at \$250, will list at about \$150. This will be the same quality of cabinets that we are now producing for other makes of \$250 machines. The tone arm and sound box will be gold plated. The motor will be Swiss-American, and best of all it will be provided with both Emerald or Black Diamond points, and regulation needles, so that it will play any of the four styles of records on the market..."

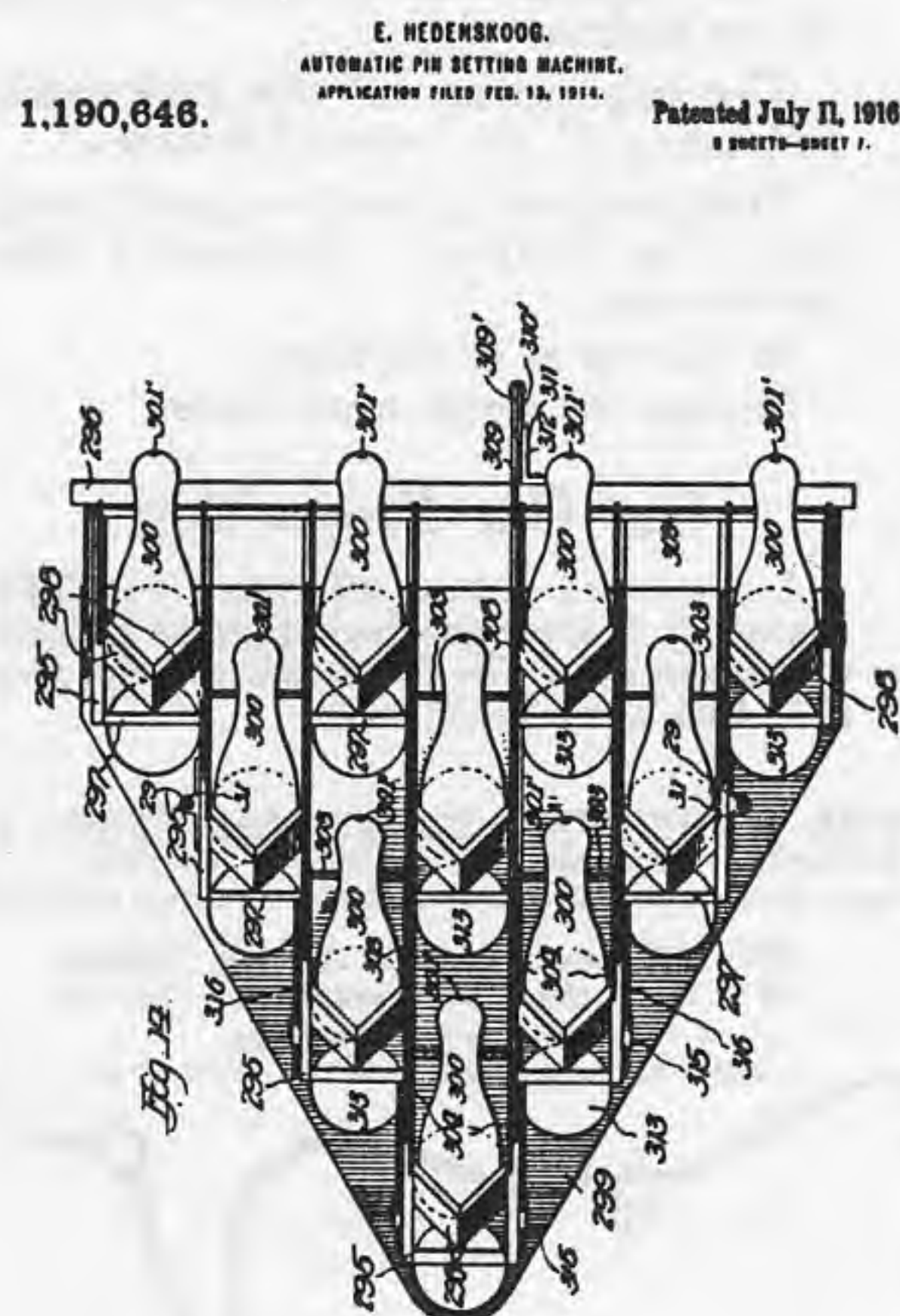
Brunswick's Connection With Pathé

At this time Brunswick began selling vertical-cut shellac phonograph records—but in Canada only. This was part of an agreement with the Pathé Freres Phonograph Company, which had opened recording facilities in New York City in 1914 and a large record pressing plant in Belleville, New Jersey. The arrangement called for Brunswick not to sell its records in the U.S. but to sell Pathé records from its outlets. Brunswick dealers were to advertise Pathé records in local newspapers and magazines.

Brunswick phonographs were specially designed so Pathé discs could be played. At the same time, Pathé bought cabinets from Brunswick. They were advertised as the Brunswick-Pathophone. This business arrangement did not last. The September 1916 issue of The Talking

Machine World announced that Brunswick and Pathé would make and sell their own machines under their own names. Brunswick dealers continued to sell Pathé records.

Not many vertical-cut Brunswick records were made. Featuring green labels with gold print, they entered the Canadian market in 1917, testing the sales potential for records with the Brunswick label. The records have a warning that they are to be played with a jewel point only. Years ago a few researchers speculated that they were pressed by the Rex Talking Machine Company of Wilmington, Delaware, but numbers do not match. Nothing links Canadian-Brunswick records to Rex.



When Brunswick entered the phonograph field in 1916, it was as a side industry. The company dominated the bowling industry and worked hard to maintain its pre-eminence. This patents drawing for a pin setting machine is from the year Brunswick phonographs were first marketed.

Brunswick Up To 1919

Unlike most new companies making phonographs and records, Brunswick had a major advantage with its own large cabinet manufacturing facilities as well as a nation-wide

The Brunswick

Insures phonographic selling success because of these things:

The financial stability and reputation of the makers.

The superiority of the instrument, embracing all the "wanted features."

The co-operation and support given you. The National advertising that creates sales.

Protection as to territory.

Prompt deliveries at all times.

Get Our Proposition

A postal-card request will bring you The Brunswick Proposition which discusses in detail the superiority of The Brunswick and the sales effort back of it. Write today.

THE BRUNSWICK-BALKE-COLLENDER CO.
CHICAGO SAN FRANCISCO NEW YORK CINCINNATI

BRANCH HOUSES IN PRINCIPAL CITIES OF UNITED STATES, CANADA, MEXICO, FRANCE

623-633 South Wabash Avenue, Chicago

29 W. 32d St., New York 7th and Main Sts., Cincinnati

CANADIAN DISTRIBUTORS:

Musical Merchandise Sales Co., 80 York Street, Toronto

retail network. Brunswick could place products on the market in a relatively short time.

Early Brunswick phonograph cabinets were well designed and crafted. A range of standard upright and console phonograph models were produced, as were period models and custom-built cabinets for higher priced markets. Many of the expensive models featured large ornate cabinets with hand crafted designs and carvings, a testament to the skill of wood workers at the factories.

Brunswick used the term phonographs, never talking machines. In advertisements Brunswick usually referred to its product as "The Brunswick." The company never produced external horn models.

With nearly 5,000 employees and 9 large factories, Brunswick had a busy year in 1916, becoming the world's largest user of hardwoods. Its annual production of pool cues alone was more than 400,000. Brunswick made and sold some 15 different models of billiard tables. Even the medium-priced "Madison" model weighed 1,950 pounds and was finished in mahogany with white holly inlay, black border, and egg-shell gloss. Each table top was finished with a flat layer of slate. Brunswick owned its own slate quarries in Vermont and Pennsylvania.

During World War I Brunswick experienced shortages of labor and materials, as did all manufacturers. In 1918 the metal allowance available to the phonograph industry was reduced to 40% of the 1917 level (it was eventually raised to 70%). Delivery delays during the war months were a problem. Imports of graphite were restricted. Good quality mica was not easily available. Brunswick was behind in filling orders. For the war effort Brunswick made gun stocks and wooden wings for airplanes. It used some spare funds to purchase Liberty Bonds.

Brunswick's phonograph business listed a loss of \$18,000 in 1916, but by 1919 it had a profit of \$703,000. Phonograph production at the Muskegon plant reached 750 phonographs a day.

In the next V78J I will discuss the machines in detail and cover Brunswick's entry into the record market in the United States.

From the October 1917 issue of The Talking Machine World. R.J. Wakeman's article here is the first in a series by him telling the full story of Brunswick phonographs and records.

The Ultona Tone Arm and Reproducer

By R. J. Wakeman

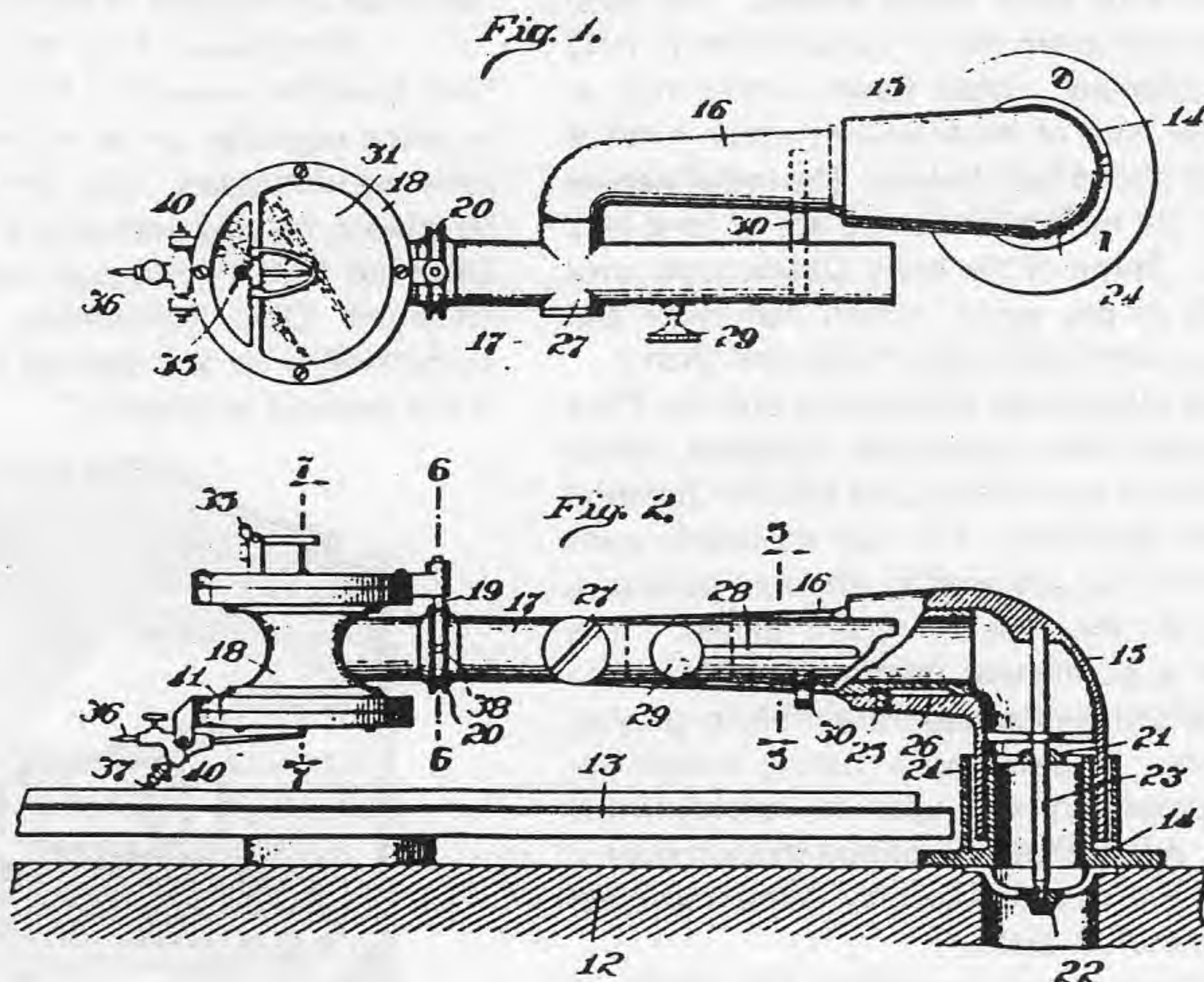
Brunswick phonographs from mid-1916 to early 1918 had two separate reproducers that could be installed on the tone arm, depending on the type of record to be played. But from early 1918 onwards, most Brunswick phonographs came equipped with the Ultona tone arm and reproducer.

The Ultona tone arm and reproducer were patented by Louis Taxon on September 18, 1917. It was introduced to the trade in the March 1918 issue of The Talking Machine World. Brunswick did not make its own tone arms. They were supplied by the General Phonograph Corporation, the company that made Okeh records. General Phonograph made several designs of tone arms

and sold them to many phonograph manufacturers.

I recently examined several Brunswick phonographs with Ultona tone arms and reproducers. The latter are nickel plated even when the tone arm and other cabinet hardware are gold plated. The tone arms are two-piece. The smaller section is a straight tube at the back end where it is designed to slip in or out of the larger back section as required by the type of disc being played. The larger tone arm section has a tapered design. The elaborate design of the tone arm causes air leaks, so the arms should be greased.

The tone arm is held in place at the base by a large metal support ring which permits horizontal movement and attaches the tone arm to



L. TAXON.

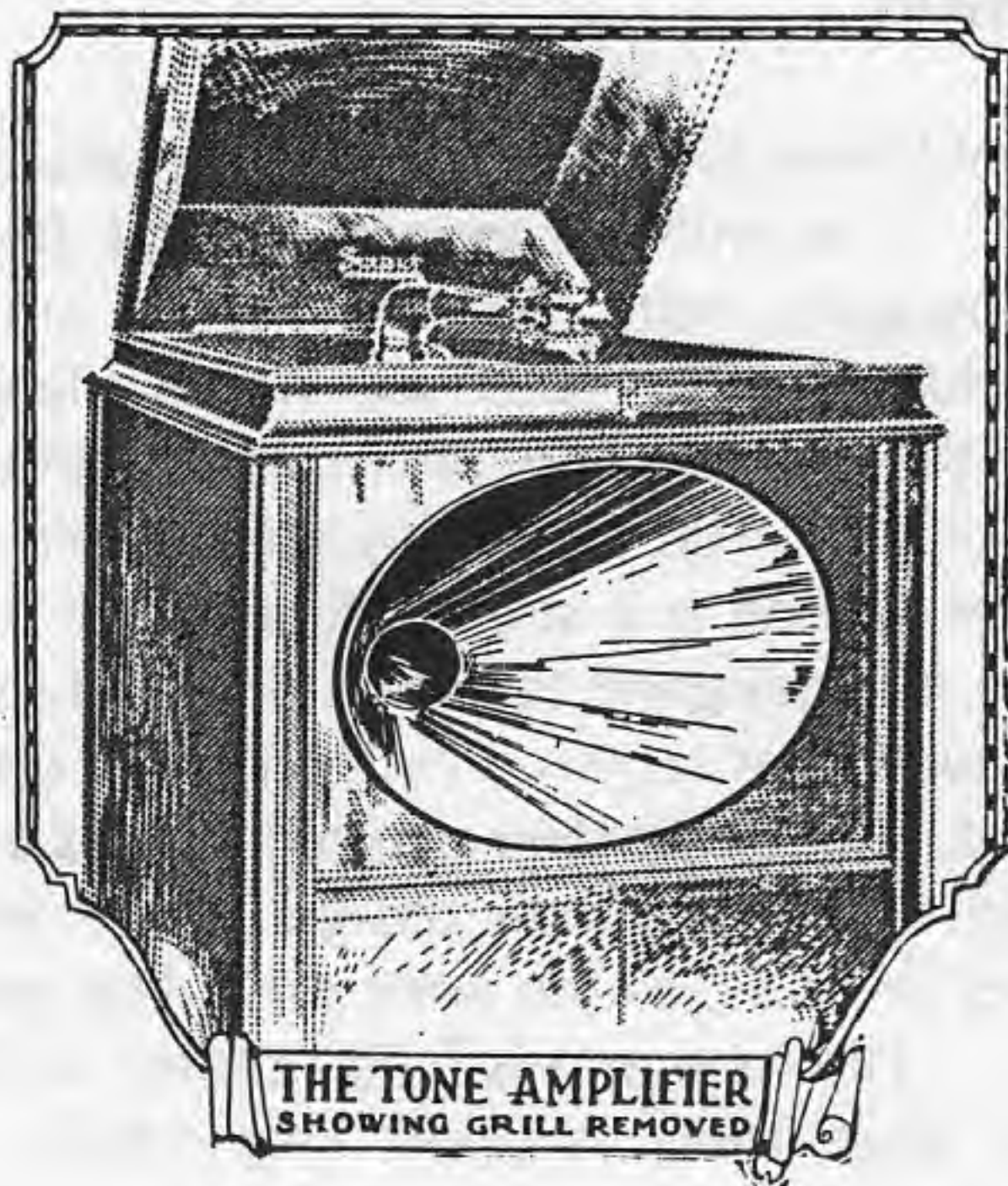
UNIVERSAL SOUND REPRODUCER AND ARM.

APPLICATION FILED FEB. 7, 1917.

1,240,267.

Patented Sept. 18, 1917.

2 SHEETS—SHEET 1.



the cabinet with three wood screws. For most models the large open end of the tone arm is 1 1/2 inches in diameter. Most have a metal ring or sleeve at the base of the tone arm which extends into a wood sound tube below. The metal sleeves measure 1 1/4 inches, but some are as long as 2 1/2 inches. Some of the early Ultona tone arms were made of pot metal, which can swell and weaken over time and easily break and shatter.

The Ultona was designed to play the three types of discs then produced: standard lateral shellac, vertical cut shellac, and Edison Diamond Discs. The reproducer has four moveable parts which need to be adjusted to different positions, depending on the type of record played. The Ultona has a permanent diamond point and an independent stylus-diaphragm assembly for playing Edison discs. It also has a sliding weight for providing proper pressure upon the record, lateral or vertical. A ball-shaped sapphire stylus mounted in a metal shank is used to play Pathé and other vertical cut shellac discs.

Opinions vary regarding the sound of Brunswick phonographs with Ultona tone arms and reproducers. Few listeners would call the sound quality outstanding. Most consider it to be merely adequate. Few collectors attempt to replace the diaphragm gaskets on the large and

complicated reproducers. From the vibrating diaphragm the sound has to make four 90 degree turns before it reaches the horn throat. The large mica diaphragms are often too thick for ideal compliance, resulting in low volume and constricted sounds. The needle arm is also too large and long. The Ultona's Edison stylus bar is too thick and is made of poor quality solid metal. (Edison's stylus bars are hollow.) Also, the Diamond Disc linkage to the diaphragm is too thick and stiff. To play Edison discs, the record grooves must move the stylus, heavy reproducer, and elaborate tone arm across the record. There is no gearing mechanism from the phonograph motor to advance the tone arm, as is found in official Edison models. Some collectors hesitate to play Edison records with the Ultona reproducer for fear of damaging records. It is essential to check the condition and quality of the Edison jewel stylus.

The advent of the Brunswick Ultona may have been the reason the Edison Company began to place warnings on its record envelopes. One early warning states, "This Re-Creation should not be played on any instrument except the Edison Diamond Disc Phonograph and with the Edison Diamond Disc Reproducer, and we decline responsibility for any damage that may occur to it if this warning is ignored."



Knocking On Doors For 78s: *Buying Race Records in the South*

By Gayle Dean Wardlow

EDITOR'S INTRODUCTION: *Finding country blues 78s of mid-'20s to late '30s vintage is difficult. It is easier to walk into a well-stocked record store and purchase CDs issued by Yazoo, Document, and other companies that cater to blues enthusiasts. Missing from CDs are accounts of how the rare, sometimes one-of-a-kind 78s ended up in the hands of collectors, who in turn have generously loaned the material to companies so the reissued music can be enjoyed by everyone.*

Gayle Dean Wardlow shares his memories of hunting for such records in the early '60s. It was still a good time for hunting, the Deep South was the right place, and knocking on doors in black neighborhoods proved to be the right method. It is doubtful a collector of opera 78s would have found Caruso Zonophones by knocking on doors in, say, New York in the early '60s, nor would collectors have found many Edison Concert cylinders by canvassing neighborhoods. But persistent blues enthusiasts found in the South recordings of equivalent rarity and historical interest. Had they not purchased 78s while canvassing neighborhoods, many blues records might have been trashed by families after a death or before a move. Some treasures would have been lost.

Wardlow is an acknowledged pioneer among blues collectors. He was the first researcher to publish important details on the lives of Charlie Patton, Robert Johnson, Ishmon Bracey, King Solomon Hill, Rev. D.C. Rice, and others. He owns one of the most complete collections of Paramount race sides and has made that collection available to companies that reissue Delta blues recordings. He co-authored with Stephen Calt the outstanding King Of The Delta Blues: The Life and Music of Charlie Patton, published by Rock Chapel Press in 1988.

* * * * *

Although I enjoyed blues and jazz records, I did not begin as a collector of race discs. As a teenager in 1954, I collected Roy Acuff records. After going to jukebox companies to find Acuff titles, I started buying Bob Wills 78s of the 1930s and other western swing artists. I still remember finding Mr. Freddie Okeh's "Milk Cow Blues" (Okeh 8422) in the collection of an in-law. It was one of those rare race records bought by whites.

Will Roy Hearne, a Los Angeles jazz dealer, told me I could "get a whole box full" of Acuff discs if I could find some rare jazz items. One afternoon in March of 1961, I had an idea. Did any of the "colored" people near me have old records still? I say "colored" here since that is language typical at the time.

I walked three blocks down the hill to the "colored" section of town and picked out a row of houses. I went to the first one, knocked on the door, and said, "Anyone home? Can you hear me?" An elderly woman opened the door.

I said, "I buy old records—you know, them old blues records. Do you have any?"

She replied, "Lord, no, child! We threw 'em away years ago. But we used to have one of those old windup machines."

I kept knocking. After about ten houses on two streets, I spotted an old, decrepit shack with flower pots on the porch. I knocked and said, "Anyone home?" An old woman, about 80, came to the door, we talked, and she went back inside while I waited anxiously on the porch. I never asked to come into houses. I assumed that old people felt safer if strangers stayed on the porches, especially whites. I only entered if invited. Sometimes people would invite me in by saying, "You can come look at 'em. I can't bend down that low to get 'em out of the Victrola."

This woman brought two discs out to the porch. "I found a couple," she said, modestly.

"They ain't no good to me."

I looked and was surprised. One of the two discs was a red label 16,000 Champion, the only time I found a Champion in Mississippi. In E-condition, this was #16058 by Alberta Jones, issued as Bessie Sanders and the Memphis Red Peppers. The other was a Bertha "Chippie" Hill Okeh disc, "Mess, Katie, Mess" (8437), with Louis Armstrong on cornet and Richard Jones on piano.

I concluded that here was a new and easy way to find records. I enjoyed that day what turned out to be beginner's luck. I soon learned that one could canvass all day and find nothing.

All that spring I knocked on doors, spending from one to three hours looking. I refined my sales approach to these words: "I buy old Victrola records—you know, them old blues records by Bessie Smith, Blind Lemon, Leroy Carr. All them old blues singers." I had learned that old people used the term "Victrola records" though sometimes they called them "Grafonola records." They remembered Bessie and Blind Lemon better than other artists.

I usually paid a quarter for each record—sometimes less, sometimes 50 cents. Normally I mentioned my price range as I made my initial inquiry. If I saw something especially desirable, I offered a dollar to be sure to get it. Selling records at the door to a white man must have struck some

as unusual. Occasionally they asked if I was planning to reissue them—"You gonna make them over again?" My standard reply: "I play guitar and piano. I want to learn these old blues myself. It's illegal to put them out again."

A disappointing number were in G to V condition. I came across many Blind Lemon Jefferson and Leroy Carr discs that had been played until the surface was gray. Paramounts were often cracked all the way to the label. Columbias and Okehs struck me as more durable than other discs.

I learned from experience that women had the records. Men moved around more, and they did not take records when they moved.

I had the best luck with older women who had flower pots on the porch, so I learned to look for flower pots and taught other collectors to look for the same. The pots indicated that someone had lived at one location for a long time. Records were often in these homes.

Within a year I had found some choice items, including a Hattie Burleson disc from 1928 (Brunswick 7042), Robert Johnson's "Last Fair Deal Going Down" (Vocalion 03445), and Johnson's "Me and the Devil Blues" (Vocalion 04108). I bought this last one within a mile of my own home. But the prize was Mattie Delaney doing "Tallahatchie River Blues" (Vocalion 1480), a song that refers to a river flood in the Delta. My copy

ETHEL WATERS'		Latest Record Is Now On Sale
It's Truly Great	2021 { THERE'LL BE SOME CHANGES MADE ONE MAN NAN	Full of Pop
<p>THE Black Swan Troubadours, with Ethel Waters and her Jazz Masters, are now on tour through the East, South and Middle West. Her personal appearance in all the cities means an increased sale of Black Swan Records for the Dealer who is prepared to meet this demand. Ethel Waters will sing the above songs as well as Number 2010—<i>Down Home Blues</i>, the only hit of the season.</p>		
<p><i>Place Your Order NOW and anticipate the demand. Immediate Delivery Assured.</i></p>		
<p align="center">PACE PHONOGRAPH CORPORATION 2289 Seventh Avenue New York, N. Y.</p>		





of this 1930 disc was the first one known to collectors. I learned this from New York collectors eager for me to trade it away.

I also discovered that women who were active church-goers only had sacred music, never blues or jazz records. I did buy gospel records that featured singing. I recall a prize item in the home of a religious woman. I had to go back twice to get this disc. It was the fabulous Rev. D.C. Rice doing "I'm Pressing On" (Vocalion 1289). Five years later I located Rice himself in Montgomery, Alabama, interviewed him, and published his story in Storyville.

Usually when I found religious records, they featured Rev. F.W. McGee or Rev. J.M. Gates. Gates was the top seller of religious records. I always left these behind.

Occasionally I found discs of non-blues artists, such as Bert Williams, which were never as worn as later blues records. The white singer whose discs could be found most often in these homes was Jimmie Rodgers. His blue yodels were especially popular. I never found, say, a Caruso disc unless people hauled out 78s given to them by white employers.

Only twice did people admit that they had old discs and then refuse to show them, which aroused my curiosity, so I never forgot those houses.

I stopped three different times at one house in the Delta. The other was in Natchez on the Mississippi River. I wonder what happened to the discs?

When I found houses with blues records--about one house in every ten--I generally found Bessie or Clara Smith, a Blind Lemon or Leroy Carr. Certain discs showed up often--Leroy Carr's "How Long, How Long," Blind Lemon's "Black Snake Moan," his "Electric Chair Blues/So That My Grave Is Kept Clean," Jim Jackson doing "Jim Jackson's Kansas City Blues." Bessie Smith's "Down Hearted Blues" was a huge seller, and I recall Paramount scout Harry Charles of Birmingham saying in the mid-'60s, "That's the best blues record ever made."

I deduced that the old people then in their 60s or 70s had bought records mainly in the 1920s. I learned that their phonographs had been bought around 1923 or slightly later, perhaps up to 1927. The blues and jazz records would start from around 1921 and end by 1926 or 1927. People in a slightly younger age group had bought their machines and records from about 1926 to 1930.

Other discs were from the late 1930s, starting from about 1937 and ending around 1942. Not surprisingly, records from the depths of the Depression--around 1931 to 1934--did not pop up.

WE ANNOUNCE

That We Have Ready for Delivery
the First Recordings by



TRIXIE SMITH

Winner of the NATIONAL Blues Singing Contest
Held at Manhattan Casino, New York
(The Winner's Cup was presented by Mrs. Irene Castle)

Black Swan, DESPERATE BLUES
Record 2039, TRIXIE'S BLUES

Pace Phonograph Corporation

2289 Seventh Avenue

New York, N. Y.

What happens when one's rabbit foot fails to function?

Bessie Smith, Columbia's exclusive colored artist and by common consent uncrowned queen of blues, tells you all about it this month in "Mama's Got the Blues" and "Outside of That." Record A-3900. Just let the public know you are selling these latest episodes in The Blues of Bessie. That's all!

COLUMBIA GRAPHOPHONE CO.
New York



By 1962 I was working in Jackson for the Orkin Pest Company, and I knocked on doors at dinner time as my interest in country blues grew.

Blind Lemon's discs were common around Jackson. He cornered the market in that area, as far as the Paramount label goes! However, I learned that small towns were the best places for finding records, not bigger places like Jackson. In every small town at least one old person still had a Victrola. An exciting find was a Black Patti 8025, "The Jail House Blues" by Sam Collins. "I brought it back from Chicago," the old man said as I gave him a dollar for the prize.

One day I stopped in the little town of Edwards--close to Charley Patton's birthplace--and found two Patton discs (12792 and 12909), which was exciting. At first Charley was hard for me to listen to because of his rough style--both playing and singing--but New York collectors had asked if I had Pattons to sell, so I knew to look for these.

I canvassed for more than ten years and occasionally into the mid-1980s. But most of the records were gone by that time, ending up in junk stores, flea markets, or trash bins. By the mid-1980s the few records that turned up were not worth the effort in finding them.

I noted interesting patterns. In 1967 I met in Alabama an old lady who had two Sam Collins Gennetts and ten Herwins, the best of which was 92001 by Alberta Jones with the Ellington Twins (Duke played piano on this 1926 disc). Later I learned that the Starr Piano Company had stores in

Birmingham and Montgomery. Salesmen visited drug and furniture stores to convince store owners to carry Gennett discs. Herwins could be ordered from St. Louis. I found a dozen different race Gennetts in west Alabama in a three year period.

One collector from Georgia who had begun canvassing in the late 1950s found both Blackbirds of Paradise discs, Gennett 6210 and 6211, in one home in Montgomery in 1967. The music had been recorded in Birmingham in 1927, but Montgomery was the band's hometown, so it made sense that the rare discs were in that city.

My best find was not from canvassing but from visiting a junk store in 1970. The store owner had acquired the discs by going door to door. Here I found nine discs on Broadway, a label related to Paramount. Broadways originally sold for 35 cents. All were broken except for a George "Bullet" Williams (5085). I found a Ma Rainey jug band record on Paramount 12804, a Paramount disc with Freezone on one side and Raymond Barrow on the other (12803), Vocalions by Garfield Akers (including "Dough Roller Blues," Vocalion 1481) and another copy of Mattie Delaney's Vocalion 1480.

Sometimes while knocking on doors, I tried to get information about artists. Asking about singers from Mississippi helped me locate Ishmon Bracey himself, who was then a preacher. This was in 1963. I located Johnnie Temple in 1965.

The 1930-32 Paramounts were never sold in Mississippi like in other states since the distribu-

tor, the St. Louis Music Company, had closed its Memphis distribution center in May 1930. I acquired my Paramounts from the 1930-32 period by swapping. I once calculated that I had traded with 49 different collectors since the early 1960s.

The most exciting find of all was Son House's "Dry Spell Blues" on Paramount 12990, the only known copy at the time. I found it in 1963 in Rayville, Louisiana. The disc's owners would not sell it to me at an affordable price. New York collector Bernard Klatzko sent \$25, asking that I buy the record for him (that was a lot of money then!). Later I got the disc back from him in a trade. It is my only Son House disc. I am also happy to own eighteen Patton records, six by Skip James (not one was found in Mississippi), a Willie Brown Paramount, and two 1930 Paramounts of Louise Johnson. I have listened carefully to my records and have shared what I have learned over the years with others interested in country blues.

I bought my Willie Brown disc, Paramount 13090, in the Louisiana Delta on a Saturday afternoon. I suspect a previous owner had dropped it at some point since it had been broken in half and taped back together with adhesive tape. Jim Coopridier repaired it for me. It was the first Willie Brown Paramount disc found. It had been kept in an old cheesebox under a bed. The woman who sold it to me owned other records that she had—for some reason—put on a chicken coop with a tin roof, and these were badly warped. Her copy of Paramount 13006 featuring Eurreal "Little Brother" Montgomery was too badly warped to be worth anything.

Through the years I taught other collectors to canvass, most notably Nick Perls, who came south in 1964 with Steve Calt. We went to Arkansas to canvass and used my car, which had Mississippi license plates. Using Perls' car, with its New York plates, would have brought trouble that summer in Mississippi due to civil rights workers being in the state to register voters. It was a tense summer, with three civil rights workers murdered 40 miles from my hometown. But we had no trouble in Arkansas knocking on doors.

Records were bought in patterns. In a home near Jackson a lady had nine Supertones in the rare 2200 series. These were taken from Vocalion masters, and the big sellers among these reissues were discs of Jim Jackson, Tampa Red teamed with Georgia Tom, and Leroy Carr. When the lady told me she had some Tommy Johnsons, I was thrilled at the chance of buying some incredibly rare blues 78s, but the records turned out to be Leroy Carr discs. She had confused the names since Carr was issued under the name Blues Johnson on Supertone. These Supertones reportedly came out in the fall of 1931.

Only once did I encounter a threat of violence. In 1967 in Pensacola, Florida, a man

RACE RECORDS

- 1128 Melancholy—Fox Trot Johnny Dodd's
Black Bottom Stompers
Bill Brown Blues—Fox Trot
Bill Brown and His Brownies
- 1126 My Soul Looked Back
Good Night, the Lord's Coming
Pilgrim Jubilee Singers
- 1125 It Is a Strange Thing to Me
The Seven R's Sermons with Singing
Rev. A. W. Nix and His Congregation
- 1130 Carolina Bound—Fox Trot
The Five Harmaniacs
Baltimore—Fox Trot With Vocal Chorus
Clarence Williams' Blue Five Orch.
- 1116 Sweet Papa Moan Voice and Guitar
with Mandolin Acc. Furry Lewis
C. & O. Blues
Singing and Guitar Blind Joe Amos
- 1122 Jesus is Sweeter Than Honey in the
Comb
You Never Will Know Who is Your
Friend Voice and Guitar "The Guitar
Evangelist" Edward W. Clayborn
- 1089 Christ's Baptism
He 'Rose From the Dead
Sermons with Singing "Steamboat Bill"
Rev. S. J. Worell, assisted by
Rev. Sister Worell, Sister McBride
- 1129 Joe Boy Blues With Violin and Piano
Nobody Can Take His Place
With Mandolin, Guitar and Piano
Singing Comedienne May Armstrong

From the December 1927 Vocalion supplement.

who had been drinking threatened me with a butcher knife when I asked to see his mother's records. I left quietly and quickly. I did not buy any records there!

In one Mississippi town a local cop stopped me as I was buying records from an elderly woman. He asked what I was doing. These were tense days during the struggle for civil rights. When the woman told the officer that I was "just buying old records," he seemed satisfied that I wasn't trying to cheat her and he left.

The early '60s were golden for canvassing.

Two men in Georgia--Jeff Tarrer of Macon and Max Tarpley of Augusta--started "door knocking" about the same time or perhaps just before I did. The idea of knocking on doors for blues 78s has been satirized by artist Robert Crumb.

Even today, when I pass a row of old houses, I wonder whether there could be old records still in the homes. By this time, the precious few that remain have been handed down to grandchildren. I am sorry to say it is dangerous to be in some black neighborhoods now. That was not a concern a few decades ago.



BLACK SWAN RECORDS

FEATURE

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 {SINCE YOU WENT AWAY } J. Arthur Gaines

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10 in. } WHY DID YOU MAKE A PLAYTHING OF ME?.....by Eddie Gray
85c }
2007 } I'M WILD ABOUT MOONSHINE.....by Creamer & Layton
10 in. } IT'S GETTIN' SO YOU CAN'T TRUST NOBODY..by Creamer & Layton
85c }
2004 } BRIGHT EYES.....Black Swan Dance Orchestra
10 in. } MY MAMMY.....Sung by Juan Harrison
85c }
2002 } FOR ALL ETERNITY.....by C. Carroll Clark
10 in. } DEAR LITTLE BOY OF MINE.....by C. Carroll Clark
85c }

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10 in. } THANK GOD FOR A GARDEN.....by Revella E. Hughes
85c }
2005 } STRUT, MISS LIZZIE.....by Lula Whidby
10 in. } HOME AGAIN BLUES.....by Lula Whidby
85c }
2003 } BLIND MAN'S BLUES.....by Katie Crippen
10 in. } PLAY 'EM FOR MAMMA, SING 'EM FOR ME.....by Katie Crippen
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From the August 1921 issue of The Talking Machine World. Notice Eddie Gray is on Black Swan 2011. This is the Gray discussed by Mike Montgomery in the last V78J and on page 50 of this issue.

The King Of Ragtime Guitar: *Blind Blake & His Piano-Sounding Guitar*

By Jas Obrecht

During the mid 1920s, the unexpectedly strong sales of Blind Lemon Jefferson's Paramount 78s sent record scouts scrambling to sign male blues artists. One of their best discoveries was Blind Blake, a swinging, sophisticated guitarist whose warm, relaxed voice was a far cry from harsh country blues. Some of Blake's 78s cast him as swinging jazzman or jivey hipster, while others walked the long, lonely road to the gallows. The man with the "famous piano-sounding guitar" is still regarded as the unrivaled master of ragtime blues fingerpicking.

"Lord have mercy, was he sophisticated!" says Jorma Kaukonen, who helped introduce Blake's guitar style to rock audiences during the '70s. "He would have been sophisticated in any era. I really like the completeness of his piano-style playing, his left- and right-hand moves. He could play a complete band arrangement by himself. That appealed to the lone-wolf mentality that I aspired to when I was learning his songs. Later on, it gave me depth for playing double-guitar and piano-guitar stuff with other people. It taught me a lot about putting music together."

"Blind Blake is a great player, a great musical figure," echoes Ry Cooder. "In the years where he was on top, he was fabulous. Blind Blake just had a good touch. He played quietly, and he didn't hit the guitar too hard. He had a nice feeling for syncopation. He's from down there in the Geechie country, and all those people have a real nice roll to what they do. He was a hell of a good player, and he had a lick that was great. And Blind Blake played all over the place, with all kinds of people, including Johnny Dodds, which is just way too much for me."

Not much is known of him. The single surviving photo shows a dapper bantamweight in a neatly pressed three-piece and bow tie, finger-picking a small-faced guitar beneath closed eyes

and a frozen Buddha grin. With its deep body and distinctive bridge, the guitar in the photo is likely a Chicago-made Harmony, a good guitar then.

The Paramount Book Of Blues, a 1927 promotional booklet, provided this strangely punctuated bio:

"We have all heard expressions of people 'singing in the rain' or 'laughing in the face of adversity,' but we never saw such a good example of it, until we came upon the history of Blind Blake. Born in Jacksonville, in sunny Florida, he seemed to absorb some of the sunny atmosphere--disregarding the fact that nature had cruelly denied him a vision of outer things. He could not see the things that others saw--but he had a better gift. A gift of an inner vision, that allowed him to see things more beautiful. The pictures that he alone could see made him long to express them in some way--so he turned to music. He studied long and earnestly--listening to talented pianists and guitar players, and began to gradually draw out harmonious tunes to fit every mood. Now that he is recording exclusively for Paramount, the public has the benefit of his talent, and agrees, as one body, that he has an unexplainable gift of making one laugh or cry as he feels, and sweet chords and tones that come from his talking guitar express a feeling of his mood."

Paramount's ads in the Chicago Defender, a popular African American newspaper, emphasized Blake's guitarman's ship: "He accompanies himself with that snappy guitar playing, like only Blind Blake can do," read copy for "Bad Feeling Blues." The company claimed that "Blind Blake and his trusty guitar do themselves proud" on "Rumblin' & Ramblin' Boa Constrictor Blues," while "Wabash Rag" was "aided by his happy guitar."

Some believe Blind Blake was born Arthur Phelps, but during the recording "Papa Charlie And Blind Blake Talk About It," Papa Charlie Jackson asks him, "What is your right name?" Blake responds, "My name is Arthur Blake." The name on the copyrights for "C.C. Pill Blues" and "Panther Squall Blues" is Arthur "Blind" Blake, which strengthens the case for Blake being his given name. He had a pronounced Southern accent and reportedly worked in south Georgia, Kentucky, along the East Coast, and in Bristol, Tennessee, before landing in Chicago.

"No matter where Blake was from, he ranks as a musical curiosity," wrote Steve Calt and Woody Mann in the liners for Yazoo's Blind Blake collection. "His records betray no basic musical orientation, and it's anyone's guess as to whether blues, guitar instrumentals, or even pop ditties were his original specialty. How he actually made

his livelihood as a performer is another enigma. While most blind guitarists were soloists who used the helter-skelter phrasing of the street dancer, Blake's blues phrasing had the strictness of a dance or band musician. It is likely that ensemble playing (perhaps with a jazz band) had a real impact on his music."

Blind Blake made his first records for Paramount during the summer of 1926, playing solo guitar behind Leola B. Wilson's lazy vaudeville blues. "Mayo Williams, the Paramount scout, says that Blind Blake was sent up from Jacksonville by a dealer," reports blues researcher Gayle Dean Wardlow. "That's how he first got on record, and his records sold very, very well." Blake showed nerves of steel his first time before the recording horn at Chicago's Marsh Studios, playing outstanding solos on Leola's "Dying Blues" and "Ashley St. Blues."

A month later Paramount cast him as a solo artist. "Early Morning Blues" was a grim "leaving blues" reminiscent of Lonnie Johnson, while the 78's flip side, the brilliant "West Coast Blues," was a ragged dance tune injected with spoken asides such as "Whoop that thing" and "I'm gonna satisfy you if I can." Blake's releases no doubt astonished and influenced other blues guitarists, such as William Moore, who patterned his Paramount 78 of "Old Country Rock" on "West Coast Blues."

Blind Gary Davis likewise studied Blake's 78s. "The guitar was being played like a piano in almost all the areas of America except the Delta," explains Stefan Grossman, "meaning that the left hand was literally doing that boom-chick, boom-chick pattern. Blake was able to use his right-hand thumb to syncopate it more, like a Charleston. He was very, very rhythmic and incredibly fast—I don't know anyone who can get to that speed. That's Blake's real claim to fame, because his chord progressions are nothing fancy. But the thumb work is fantastic, and what he's doing with his right hand set him apart from everyone. Rev. Gary Davis said Blake had a 'sportin' right hand.' Davis took that and got into



On "Madison Street Rag," Blind Blake provides expert guitar accompaniment (and the whistling?) for Banjo Joe, who is really Gus Cannon. This was issued in early 1928. As a member of Cannon's Jug Stompers, Cannon recorded it again on January 30, 1928 (Victor 21267).

even more complicated modes."

"I suspect Blind Blake was a three-finger picker," offers Kaukonen, "and I have a sneaking suspicion he wore picks, because he had such a snappy, percussive sound and he's not popping the strings the way bare-finger players do. His favorite keys were C, G, and E, although I'm pretty sure he could play in any of them if he wanted to."

At his October 1926 solo session, Blake balanced down-and-out blues songs with the good-time hokum of "Too Tight" and "Come On Boys Let's Do That Messin' Around," which has an early example of a scat solo. He flexed his guitar prowess on his next 78, "Skeedle Loo Doo Blues" and the double-time sections of "Stonewall Street Blues." Paramount summoned Blake and pianist Jimmy Blythe to Leola Wilson's November session, which produced a pair of fine 78s. Less than six months after his entry into the record biz, Blake was playing behind the great Ma Rainey on "Morning Hour Blues," "Little Low Mama Blues," and "Grievin' Hearted Blues."

Early the next year Paramount featured kazoo—probably played by Blake himself—on "Buck-Town Blues" and brought in a bones percussionist for "Dry Bone Shuffle" and "That Will Never Happen No More." Blind Blake cut another seven songs during October '27. The smoothly syncopated "Hey Hey Daddy Blues," the hip horn imitations of "Sea Board Stomp," and the tour de force "Southern Rag" suggest that he woodshedded on guitar during his half-year recording hiatus.

"I'm goin' to give you some music they call the Geechie music now," Blake announced at the beginning of "Southern Rag," which is laced with images of planting rice, sugar cane, cotton, and peas. Some authors suggest that Blake slips into the Geechie and Gullah accents of Georgia's South Sea Islands during the track, but Wardlow disagrees: "I don't think he intentionally goes into the Geechie accent, but he was down from around that part of the country—South Carolina, Georgia, and Florida."

In November, Gus Cannon joined in on banjo for the minstrel tune "He's In The Jailhouse

Now." During the 1950s Sam Charters asked Cannon for his memories of Blake. According to the book Sweet As The Showers Of Rain, Cannon responded: "We drank so much whiskey! I'm telling you we drank more whiskey than a shop! And that boy would take me out with him at night and get me so turned around I'd be lost if I left his side. He could see more with his blind eyes than I with my two good ones." Mayo Williams also reported that Blake liked to get drunk and fight.

In the spring of 1928 Blind Blake cut his most ambitious records. Jimmy Bertrand manned xylophone for "Doggin' Me Mama Blues" and warbled slide whistle on "C.C. Pill Blues," while the great Johnny Dodds soloed on clarinet. "Oh, that record!" enthuses Ry Cooder. "That's it, see. That's the whole thing right there. That's all you need to hear. And then you know: There's a whole world we've all missed and will never know." (The "C.C." stood for "compound cathartic.")

Dodds and Bertrand provided more crazy horn and percussion accompaniment on Blake's raggy "Hot Potatoes" and the swinging "Southbound Rag." Bertrand, Dodds, and Blake were also teamed on "Elzadie's Policy Blues"/"Pay



This drawing for a 1928 Paramount advertisement was based on the only known photograph of Blind Blake.

Day Daddy Blues" with Elzadie Robinson, a cabaret singer and chorus girl from Logansport, Louisiana. Blake was soon back in the studio with blues moaner Bertha Henderson and gospel crooner Daniel Brown. Bertha's "Let Your Love Come Down" featured Blake playing stride piano with rocking solos. Working alone, Blake simultaneously played guitar and harmonica on "Panther Squall Blues."

Blind Blake may have earned up to \$50 per Paramount side, but Little Brother Montgomery claimed that the guitarist's regular source of income during the late 1920s came from playing South Side Chicago house rent parties. With its piano in the living room, Blake's apartment at 31st and Cottage Grove became a gathering place where Montgomery, Charlie Spand, Roosevelt Sykes, Tampa Red, Big Bill Broonzy, and other musicians could slam moonshine and jam blues.

"I met Blind Blake in Chicago," Ishmon Bracey told Gayle Dean Wardlow, "but I couldn't second him. He was too fast for me. Blind Blake, Tampa Red, Lonnie Johnson, and Scrapper Blackwell—all of them guitar players was buckin' one another. Blind Blake was too fast."

Blake's 1928 releases such as "Ramblin' Mama Blues," "Back Door Slam Blues," "Cold Hearted Mama Blues," and "Low Down Loving Gal" suggest he had bitter feelings towards women. His anger took a scary turn on "Notoriety Woman Blues," during which he sang, "To keep her quiet I knocked her teeth out her mouth." By contrast, Blake's final recording that year, "Sweet Papa Low Down," was a bouncy Charleston with piano, cornet, xylophone, and Blake's own happy jiving.

The guitarist journeyed to Richmond, Indiana, in June '29 for a series of sides with Alex Robinson on piano. "Slippery Rag" rocked the house with driving chords and mind-boggling solos. "Fightin' The Jug" reinforced his reputation for being a heavy drinker:

*"When I die, folks, without a doubt,
When I die, folks, without a doubt,
You won't have to do nothin' but pour me out"*

That August, Blake was recorded at the height of his powers. He blasted toe-to-toe with Charlie Spand, Detroit's premier piano boogie man, on "Hastings St. (Hastings St. Boogy)," named after a street in the city's old black section. John Lee Hooker, who describes this track as "the real blues," speculates that Blake may have lived in Detroit at some point, since Blake mentions a specific address, 169 Brady, during the song and then says, "Must be somethin' there very marvelous, mm, mm, mm. I believe it's somethin' that'll make you feel oh boy and how!"

"Yeah, Brady was right off of Gratiot," Hook explains. "Detroit was jumpin' then, and Hastings Street was the best street in town. Everything you wanted was right there. Everything you didn't want was right there. It ain't no more now. It's a freeway now, called Chrysler Freeway. But that was a good street, a street known all over the world."

Blake's next selection, "Diddie Wa Diddie," is a classic ragtime blues, with each break a minor masterpiece. Blake masterfully heightened the song's rhythmic intensity by rushing to the root



"South Bound Rag" was issued in early 1928.

of a new chord an eighth-note before the next downbeat. With its beautiful lines, harmonic chimes, and bluesy bends, "Police Dog Blues" also showcases his consummate guitarman'ship. He recorded "Chump Man Blues" at the same session. "Blind Blake was basically a ragtime guitar player," notes Stefan Grossman, "but then he had things like 'Chump Man Blues,' which is a blues in D. It's not as exciting as his playing in C or G, but it has an almost Bahaman, Joseph Spence sound."

Blind Blake made a few more sides in Chicago later that summer—a 78 featuring Tiny Parham or Aletha Dickerson on piano, the agile instrumentals "Guitar Chimes" and "Blind Arthur's Breakdown." "Papa Charlie And Blind Blake Talk About It," the first Blake 78 recorded at Paramount's new studio in Grafton, Wisconsin, joined two musical giants in a stuttering shuck-and-jive routine. With its exaggerated vocals and Jackson's utilitarian banjo strums overwhelming the arrangement, the song wasn't far removed from blackface minstrelsy. Blake was in fabulous form backing Irene Scruggs (billed as Chocolate Brown) during his next Grafton trip. Her "Itching Heel" no doubt struck a resonant chord among many women attached to bluesmen:

*"He don't do nothing but play on his old guitar,
While I'm busting suds out in the white folks'
yard"*

Blake, in turn, responded to her verbal jabs with sped-up guitar parts.

Beginning with his May '30 solo sides, the sheen was mostly gone from Blind Blake's playing and singing. "When he started to drink too much—you can hear it towards the end—it just doesn't work anymore," observes Cooder. "He's physically past it, because you've got to be sharp to sound that good." He rekindled the old fire in "Righteous Blues" that December, and made a final appearance as a sideman in May '31 behind Laura Rucker. Blake cut three 78s under his own name that year, but no copies of "Dissatisfied Blues" / "Miss Emma Liza (Sweetness)" or "Night And Day

Blues" / "Sun To Sun" are known to survive.

His two-part "Rope Stretchin' Blues" tells the woeful tale of a man who catches a stranger in his house, busts his head with a club, and winds up hanging for it.

The final Blind Blake release, the old Victorian music hall standard "Champagne Charlie Is My Name" backed by "Depression's Gone From Me Blues," which recycles the "Sitting On Top Of The World" melody, was recorded in Grafton during June 1932. But is it Blake? "Even though it says Blind Blake on the label on both sides," says Gayle Dean Wardlow, "it seems like that last record's a split side—one side is him, and one side is not him. 'Depression's Gone From Me Blues'—that's Blake. I think 'Champagne Charlie' is by someone else—it doesn't sound like Blake to me." Grossman concurs: "That 78 doesn't have his taste, his feel. Who knows? It might have been somebody else, even a different Blind Blake."

The bluesman's final fate is uncertain. "Blind Blake—now, that's another one that's a mystery," reported Georgia Tom Dorsey during the 1960s. "How he got out of the show [business], I don't know. But he was a good worker and a nice fellow to get along with, as far as I'm concerned." After Paramount folded in '32, Blake never recorded again. "I figure he went back to Jacksonville when his recording contract was over," says Wardlow. "No one's ever found out what happened to him. Gary Davis said that Blake was hit by a streetcar, and that's the only rumor of his death that I know of. Maybe he got robbed and killed, 'cause he was blind."

For a while, though, Blind Blake's records sold almost as well as Blind Lemon's, and he had a tremendous impact, especially in the Southeast. Personally, I'd like to believe Blind Blake lived the lines he sang in "Poker Woman Blues":

*"Sometime I'm rich, sometime I ain't got a cent,
Sometime I'm rich, sometime I ain't got a cent,
But I've had a good time everywhere I went"*

© **Jas Obrecht 1996.**

Billy Murray: The Final Years

By Frank Hoffmann

An Excerpt from The Billy Murray Biography,
by Frank Hoffmann, Dick Carty, and Quentin Riggs

Billy Murray and partner Walter Scanlan turned increasingly to radio in the early 1930s, as Henry Burr had done a few years earlier. The record industry was severely crippled and making stage appearances was no longer profitable because of talking pictures. Jim Walsh notes in the February 1952 issue of Hobbies that the two singers became associated with a comedienne named Marcella Shields, whose singing style resembled Aileen Stanley's and whose conversational mannerisms were like Gracie Allen's. The trio appear to have been featured on an NBC network program sponsored by Dutch Masters cigars during the 1931-1932 period. In late 1931 the trio was broadcast over New York's WJZ, with William Wirges' Orchestra providing accompaniment. In 1933 Murray decided to drop out, but Scanlan and Shields worked together intermittently for another year or two.

Recordings in the Early '30s

Murray and Scanlan had continued making records until 1932 when—with the Depression at its worst—demand all but disappeared, record sales bottoming out. Murray managed to find some work. Walsh notes in the June 1942 issue of Hobbies, "He sang old-time popular songs for the movies in such productions as the 'Bouncing Ball' comedies. He even imitated animals for the talkies and became well known as a radio actor, playing character parts in the Parker Family series and other popular air shows."

It is doubtful that Murray had much trouble finding work during the Depression. He knew many people in the entertainment world and was well liked. Moreover, his old friend Henry Burr was an executive at NBC and Scanlan became a producer at another network in 1932 or 1933.

It is likely that both would have given Murray work if he had needed it.

In 1936 Murray returned to the recording studio to do spoken character roles on the Aesop's Fables cycle. These children's recordings were made for Brunswick and issued on three 10-inch discs. The participants were Murray, Bradley Barker, and Loraine Leopold, and labels identified the artists as "Billy Murray, Bradley Barker & Company." Barker was famous for animal imitations and was especially active on radio during the 1930s in supplying such sound effects. The Brunswick masters were also dubbed onto 7-inch Playtime records. Playtime No. 262 was issued by Little Pal in a 7-inch format.

In 1937 Murray sang the lead on "Mickey Mouse's Birthday Party," issued as Melotone 70106 and credited to the American Novelty Orchestra. The song paid tribute to the Disney character on the eve of the tenth anniversary of Steamboat Willie's release. Circumstances behind the session are vague today though Disney evidently did not sanction the project.

Bluebird Sessions

In the spring of 1940, Leonard Joy, the head of RCA Victor's New York recording studios, asked Murray to participate as lead vocalist in the recording of "It's the Same Old Shillelagh," which would be issued on Bluebird, the company's budget label. Murray was elated though the company's offer of \$25 payment for his services struck him as so low that the singer asked for advice from his friend, publisher Jimmy Martindale, who encouraged Murray to accept the offer. After all, Murray had done very little recording in the past decade and was no longer well known by the record-buying public. This would get his name

before the public again, enabling the singer to demand higher fees in the future. Quentin Riggs learned this in the late 1940s from Jimmy Martindale but does not know whether Murray commanded a higher fee for other Bluebird recordings made in the early 1940s.

Martindale accompanied Murray to the RCA studio to record "Shillelagh." They arrived early and stood at the back of the studio to watch as Joy and his band recorded "Frenesi," which would be issued on the reverse side of "Shillelagh." The vocalist employed for the track made mistakes, requiring take after take, much to Joy's growing annoyance. At some point Joy saw Murray at the studio's rear. Joy then did an exaggerated double-take, looking Murray's way again and exclaiming, "Well, if it isn't good old Billy 'One-Take' Murray!" Murray recorded "Shillelagh" in only one take.

The recording was issued on Bluebird No.

10811 in 1940. The label cites the band as Harry's Tavern Band and also states, in smaller print at the bottom, "vocal refrain by Billy Murray." He actually sang lead throughout the cut. The disc was sold well enough for Joy to think Murray might once again be a successful recording artist.

Murray returned to the Victor studios in October 1940. Two of his closest friends, Jimmy Martindale and Jim Walsh, accompanied him and even participated in the session for one song as part of the ensemble providing background vocals. Decades later, in a two-part musical documentary narrated for Merritt Malvern Sound in 1976, Walsh recalled that on this occasion "all the staff personnel came down to the recording studio to watch the great man of the old-time acoustic recordings go through his act." Murray did three takes each of "The Irish Were Egyptians Long Ago" and "When Patty McGinty Plays the Harp." When Murray suggested changing one line of the second



When Francis Dances With Me

"YOU CAN'T GO WRONG WITH ANY FEIST SONG"

ASK TO HEAR IT! INSTANTLY POPULAR IN VAUDEVILLE and for DANCING

In the 1920s The Talking Machine World ran elaborate advertisements for new songs available on sheet music but not yet recorded. Song publishers paid for the ads. In 1922 Ada Jones and Billy Murray had their last hit as a duo with this song composed by Benny Ryan and Sol Violinsky, who was really Sol Ginsberg. Victor 18830 was issued in January 1922 and turned out to be Ada Jones' last Victor disc. Her recording career suffered when popular music changed in the WWI era, leaving her with only the occasional session, usually for small companies such as Rex. This final Victor disc allowed Jones to end her career with a hit. She died on May 2, 1922.

chorus of "The Irish Were Egyptians" for variety, Walsh came up with an acceptable line, which ended up on the released version of the song.

The two songs were issued as Bluebird No. 10926. This time Murray was given top billing on the label, with Harry's Tavern Band relegated to the smaller typeface. In late 1940 the singer returned to Victor to record "The Guy at the End of the Bar" and "The Beard in the Gilded Frame," issued as Bluebird 10980. In early 1941 he recorded "I'd Feel At Home If They'd Let Me Join the Army" and "'Twas Only an Irishman's Dream," issued as Bluebird 10995.

Illnesses and Semi-Retirement


On August 4, 1941 Murray went to the Victor studios to record a medley of George M. Cohan songs but he had a sore throat. His voice was too hoarse for anything to be issued. Throat specialists were consulted and, in time, the problem cleared up.

Toward the end of his recovery period,

Murray was a featured guest artist on the WLS National Barn Dance radio program. Henry Burr had been a regular member of the Barn Dance troupe for years, winning new fans singing ballads. Burr died on April 6, 1941.

Similar in ways to WSM's Grand Ole Opry show, the Barn Dance was broadcast from the stage of the Eighth Street Theater in Chicago. Carried on the NBC network, it rivaled the Nashville-based program in popularity. Murray, delighted to reach a wide audience, began performing on the show in 1941. According to Walsh in the June 1942 issue of *Hobbies*, Murray soon spent much time in Chicago and "made one of the biggest hits of any guest the Barn Dance [had] had in years." A recording of Murray singing a medley of George M. Cohan songs on the program was taped off the air and has been circulated among some Murray enthusiasts.

Murray is mentioned in a brief item in the January 13, 1941 issue of *Time*. This piece was written by Walsh, who did not receive a byline credit:



**Ten Little Fingers
and Ten Little Toes**

*"You can't go wrong
with any Feist song"*

A "Peach" of a song!

ASK TO HEAR IT!

Billy Murray sang this with Ed Smalle. Issued on Victor 18830, it was the "B" side for "When Francis Dances With Me." Smalle had other recording partners--Vernon Dalhart, Vaughn DeLeath, Johnny Marvin--and he recorded as a solo artist, but his duets with Murray from the 1922-24 period sold best. In 1925 he helped transform the mildly successful Shannon Four into the very popular Revelers, serving as the vocal group's arranger and accompanist.

A NEW DANCE CRAZE STUMBLING

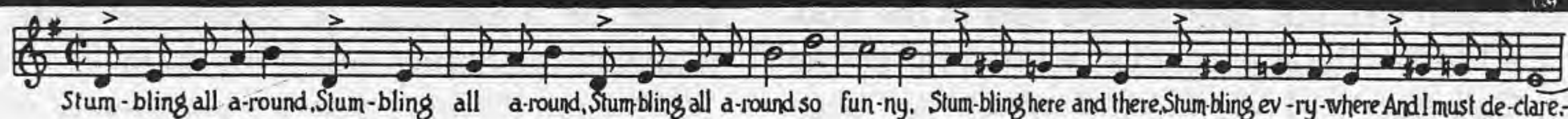


By
ZEZ CONFREY

A FOX TROT ODDITY

"You can't go wrong
With any **FEIST** song"

HEAR IT NOW



Zeze Confrey's 1922 "Stumbling" nearly matched the 1921 "Kitten On The Keys" in terms of popularity. Whereas "Kitten" was a novelty rag not suitable for dancing, "Stumbling" was very popular as a dance number—certainly many dance bands recorded it. Its lyrics are about dancing, and no vocal version sold better than Billy Murray's on Victor 18906, issued in August, 1922.

Unlike Columbia, which has cached its master records of early jazz, Victor has thrown away all its popular discs made before 1925. Among the records Victor junked were 4,000 by one man: broad-faced Billy Murray, balladeer and comic. In the crank-it-up days of the phonograph, Tenor Murray's brothy voice was one of the great sellers....Lately Victor gave 63-year-old Billy Murray a chance at a comeback, on Bluebird records. Last week his voice, no longer a broth but a rich Irish stew, was to be heard in "The Guy at the End of the Bar."...

Billy Murray was brought up in Denver, ran away at 16, sang in traveling medicine shows...Soon Victor was calling him the "Denver Nightingale." In 1907 Lee De Forest, experimenting in an Manhattan office building, played Billy's record of "College Life." The broadcast was accidentally picked up by the chief electrician at the Brooklyn Navy Yard. It scared the daylights out of him.

Murray refused to cut records for several months after his illness. According to Walsh, Murray would say, "Wait till my voice is back where it used to be!" He resumed studio work

later in 1941, making "That's How You Can Tell They're Irish" and "The Hat My Father Wore on St. Patrick's Day," issued as Bluebird No. 11071. The latter was a remake of the 1909 version by Murray and the Haydn Quartet.

Murray had one more session date with Victor in 1941, recording "When I See All the Lovin' They Waste On Babies (I Long For the Cradle Again)" and "He Took Her For a Sleigh Ride (In the Good Old Summertime)." Issued as Bluebird No. 11134, they were his final recordings for the company.

In 1943 Murray made his last studio recording, "Casey and Cohen in the Army," teaming with Monroe Silver. Issued on Beacon No. 2001, it was the last in a running series of Casey and Cohen discs. He received \$50 for this work.

According to a Murray obituary published in The Freeport Leader a decade later, he worked at the Grumman Aircraft Engineering Corporation, in Bethpage, New York, during World War II. Main duties were announcing and singing over the firm's inter-communication system.

Murray developed heart trouble early in 1944. His doctor recommended that Murray stop—at least for a time—all professional activities. The

enforced rest halted whatever momentum Murray had built up in reviving his recording career.

After a period of recuperation, Murray considered a return to recording. Quentin Riggs learned when visiting Murray on September 10, 1947 that Decca in either 1945 or 1946 expressed interest in Murray doing a four-disc Souvenir Album, but nothing came of the proposed idea.

Murray was ready for a studio comeback when Coral Records approached him in the mid-to late-1940s. Coral executives wished to remake "Mr. Gallagher and Mr. Shean," which had been introduced in the Ziegfeld Follies of 1922. Al Shean himself would take part in the recording. A singer was needed for the part originally played by Edward Gallagher, who died in 1929. Murray had been near the peak of his popularity when the song was first popular in the early '20s, and when Paul Whiteman and His Orchestra recorded "Mr. Gallagher and Mr. Shean" for Victor 19007 on January 2, 1923, Murray sang the vocal refrain. It was the first Whiteman disc to feature a vocal.

Murray seemed an inspired choice for the Coral recording. Riggs learned years later from Martindale that Murray again sought Martindale's advice regarding fees for a session. Martindale suggested that the singer ask for more money than he had received from RCA-Victor for the Bluebird releases. Murray did so, and the record ended up being made by someone else in the Gallagher role. Martindale regretted that his advice had cost Murray the chance to make the recording.

John Bieling Days

Murray adjusted to retirement. In September 1947, a gathering of acoustic recording artists for the second John Bieling Day in Hempstead, Long Island caught the attention of someone connected to the Paul Whiteman radio program. Murray was approached about appearing on the show towards the end of the following week, with interest also expressed in Quentin Riggs since it was thought unusual that a teenager would be enthusiastic about turn-of-the-century recordings.

The proposed guest appearance never materialized but Riggs recalls that Murray did not express disappointment. He seemed content to live out his remaining years in relative anonymity, surrounded by close friends.

Murray evidently enjoyed singing in 1950 during the fifth annual John Bieling Day. Named in honor of the original first tenor for the American Quartet, the first John Bieling Day was at Bieling's home on a Saturday in September 1946. This inaugural gathering and those held in 1947 and 1949 at the Bieling home were relatively small. In September 1948, the event was held at the Garden City Hotel and over 100 people attended. The committee planning the fifth gathering, scheduled for September 9, 1950, tried to book space at the Garden City Hotel again since it would allow many artists and collectors to attend, but the hotel had been booked solid for that month. The Elks Lodge at Hempstead, Long Island, was then selected but the committee was told that only about 60 persons could be accommodated.

Artists who attended these gatherings included violinist Fred Hager, tenor Charles Harrison, banjoist Fred Van Eps, tenor John Young, contralto Elsie Baker, trumpet player Edna White, tenor Harvey Hindermeyer, counter-tenor Will Oakland, Grace Spencer (known as "the First Lady of the Phonograph"), tenor Arthur Hall, flutist Eugene Rose, pianist Frank Banta, tenor Walter Scanlan, tenor Irving Kaufman, and Murray.

At the 1950 gathering, as at previous meetings, fans and artists talked about old days. Some artists, including Fred Van Eps and Edna White, enlivened the proceedings by performing. Murray unexpectedly sang a song.

The party also provided opportunities for artists to pay tribute to those who had helped them achieve success. Scanlan told the audience of Murray's assistance. He thanked Murray in particular for having arranged his partnership with Ada Jones, with whom Scanlan made recordings. This turned out to be the last gathering of its kind. The John Bieling Day celebration scheduled for 1951 was cancelled at the last minute.

Murray's Death

Murray's death came suddenly. Soon after it happened, Jimmy Martindale provided an account in a letter that Jim Walsh quoted in the October 1954 issue of Hobbies.

Friends stopped by Murray's house on Tuesday, August 17, 1954, to take the Murrays for a drive to Jones Beach. When they arrived, Murray proposed that the group attend Guy Lombardo's production of Arabian Nights, starring Lauritz Melchior and Hope Holiday. The colorful musical extravaganza was at the Marine Stadium on its gigantic open-air stage.

At the box office Murray purchased tickets. Leaving the window, he walked a few feet and then leaned his back on a railing. The rest of his party noticed this as well as his breathing heavily. Murray attempted to ease their concern by stating "You take your tickets and go in. I'll join you in a minute. I think I will go to the lavatory." The others stayed where they were as Murray entered the bathroom. Within fifteen seconds they saw people pouring into the facility. Murray's wife and her male companion dashed in to find Murray on the floor surrounded by a crowd. The friend tried to administer first aid, but it was too late. Murray appears to have died almost immediately.

The Rev. John J. Madden said a Rosary that Friday night for Murray in the Richard A.

Hunferford Parlors, located in Freeport at the intersection of South Ocean Avenue and Pine Street. Murray's primary residence had been a house in Freeport that he had purchased from songwriter Albert Von Tilzer in 1920. Elks rites were conducted the same evening.

According to Martindale and Murray's obituary, printed in The Freeport Leader on August 26, 1954, a Requiem Mass was celebrated at Our Holy Redeemer Roman Catholic Church, 10 a.m., Saturday, August 21. It was presided over by Father Madden, the Rev. Francis P. McLoone, deacon, and the Rev. Jerome Kieber, subdeacon. The tenor Carl Mathieu, who was Murray's former associate in the Eight Popular Victor Artists, sang the mass. The burial was in Holy Rood Cemetery, Old Country Road, Westbury, Long Island.

The Freeport newspaper reported that Murray's only survivors were his wife Madeline and brother Barton, who resided in Denver. Murray was given a short obituary in Billboard, the music trade weekly. Walsh wrote Murray tributes for not only Hobbies but Variety, the latter piece published under the title "Victor's Billy Murray Dies at 77; Had Peak Phono Audience in His Era."

The Murray biography will be published in early 1997 by Scarecrow (800-462-6420). When the book is available, V78J will list dealers selling it.

OCTOBER 15, 1923

THE TALKING MACHINE WORLD

93

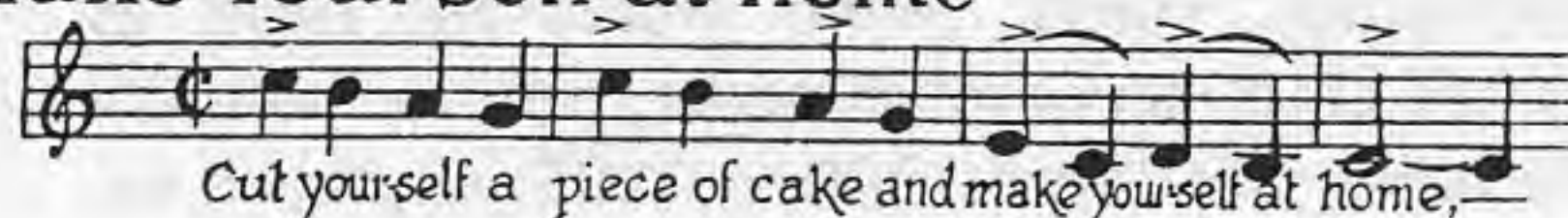
The Big Comedy Song Sensation

CUT YOURSELF A PIECE OF CAKE

And Make Yourself at Home

"You can't go wrong
With any FEIST song"

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N.Y.C.



Pioneers C.H.H. Booth and J.J. Fisher

By Tim Gracyk

Some pioneer recording artists were identified by initials instead of first names, five notable examples being S.H. Dudley, J.W. Myers, A.D. Madeira, C.H.H. Booth and J.J. Fisher. We know full names for three of the above thanks to the published research of Jim Walsh and others. A.D. Madeira was Addison Dashiell Madeira; S.H. Dudley was Samuel Holland Rous; J.W. Myers was John W. Myers.

Jim Walsh never stated the first names of C.H.H. Booth and J.J. Fisher, perhaps because he never discovered those names. I have recently learned more about these two men from articles published soon after each one died.

C.H.H. Booth

Soon after the last V78J was issued, I was dismayed to learn that in correcting what seemed an error, I created one! In my article "Corrections to Guy Marco's Encyclopedia of Recorded Sound In The United States," I called attention to Marco's "Ragtime Recordings" entry, which states that "the earliest disc of piano ragtime is 'Creole Belles'...played by Christopher H.H. Booth" (568). I wrote that this should read Charles H.H. Booth.

Marco was correct in giving "Christopher" as Booth's first name. William Shaman recently sent a copy of Booth's obituary published in the New York Times on April 20, 1939. Christopher Henry Hudson Booth died of a heart ailment on April 19, 1939. His work as a professional organist and his published compositions--masses, symphonies, songs, piano works--are cited as Booth's chief accomplishments, but the obituary also notes that "from 1900 to 1905 he played for Red Seal artists of the Victor Talking Machine Company." On a few Victor discs and in early industry literature, the pianist is identified as "C.H.H. Booth."

Booth accompanied on piano many Victor artists in the company's early years, and not just

Red Seal artists. For example, Brian Rust's Complete Entertainment Discography shows Booth accompanying countertenor Richard Jose in 1904 sessions. Jose's "May, Sweet May" is as impressive for its grand keyboard runs as for the infectious melody (in waltz time) and the beauty of Jose's voice. The obituary notes that Booth was an organist at St. Paul's Lutheran Church, New York, from 1899 to 1905, and the Complete Entertainment Discography has Booth at the organ for Jose singing hymns (labels merely state "with Organ Accompaniment" or "with organ"). Booth was later, from 1909 to 1939, organist and choirmaster at the Lutheran Church of the Advent. He lived at 46 West 93rd St. in New York City.

I cite Jose as one example of a Victor artist assisted by Booth because I like to imagine the two men sharing memories of England, perhaps between takes at recording sessions (they recorded for Victor exclusively). Each had emigrated from England--Jose around 1880, Booth in 1895. Booth became a U.S. citizen around 1905. He was born in Accrington, Lancashire, on September 5, 1865. His father was Charles Hudson Booth--there was a Charles in the family!

Brian Rust in Jazz Records: 1897-1942 (5th edition) cites C.H.H. Booth as the accompanist for Dan Quinn when the tenor recorded "O Didn't He Ramble" in 1902 and again in 1904. Rust also cites Booth as accompanist for Silas Leachman, stating, "The accompanist is named by Silas Leachman in the course of various performances." A note on page 320 in the second volume of Fagan and Moran's Encyclopedic Discography of Victor Recordings reports that in a 1904 version of "Turkey In The Straw" (B-1690), Leachman seems to shout, "Lawdy! Lawdy! Come on, Mr. Booth."

Because he was Victor's house pianist, Booth can be heard on many Red Seal and black label Victor discs though identifying his work is not always possible. He was not the only pianist to accompany early Victor artists. Frank P. Banta

(father of Frank E. Banta) worked for Victor, as did Fred Bachman. In the January 1954 issue of Hobbies, Walsh writes that Billy Murray said Fred Bachman "was his accompanist when he made his first records for Victor," which was in September 1903. Bachman was also an Edison artist, and he stands behind George W. Johnson in a photograph taken around 1900 of over 40 Edison artists (see the November 1961 issue of Hobbies or the November 1920 issue of Talking Machine World).

Booth's work with Red Seal artists is noted in Raymond Sooy's "Memoirs of My Recording and Travelling Experiences for the Victor Talking Machine Company," parts of which are quoted in the Miscellanea appendix of the first volume of Fagan and Moran's Encyclopedic Discography of Victor Recordings. Sooy reports in a passage dated April 3, 1903 that the first Red Seal artist was contralto Ada Crossley: "Piano accompaniment was played by C.H.H. Booth" (343).

Ragtime scholars today cite Booth as the musician who made the earliest known recording of piano ragtime. Not surprisingly, his November 1, 1901 recording of J. Bodewalt Lampe's "Creole Belle," published in 1900, goes unmentioned in

Booth's obituary. Few were interested in ragtime in 1939 and Booth could not have anticipated that this 1901 recording would be judged by later generations as having some historic significance. It is only in a ragtime context that Guy Marco's recorded sound encyclopedia mentions Booth.

Booth recorded at least one of his own compositions for Victor, the piano solo "Gavotte in A" (B-1225). It was recorded in 1904 and was originally issued as Monarch 2508.

J.J. Fisher

Obituaries are among the most valuable secondary sources for anyone researching pioneer artists. Primary sources include actual recordings, company files, and people who recorded in the acoustic era--of course, the days of interviewing such artists are over. It is through The Talking Machine World that I recently learned the first name of turn-of-the-century recording artist J.J. Fisher. His death is announced in the January 1923 issue, with the singer's name given as John J. Fisher. He died in December 1922 or early January 1923 of "apoplectic shock"--a stroke--at age

LAUGHING SONG.

Arranged by FRANK BANTA.

Words and Music by GEO. W. JOHNSON.



Mike Montgomery duplicated for V78J the 1894 sheet music of George W. Johnson's "Laughing Song." It is clear from this that Johnson worked closely with Frank P. Banta, who is given credit here as an arranger. Banta was a pianist for several record companies before his death in November, 1903. His son was pianist Frank E. Banta, born in 1897.

56 in his home at 1907 Park Avenue in Bridgeport, Connecticut. He was survived by his wife Maude and two brothers. No children are noted.

The 1923 article states that Fisher was a "pioneer Columbia artist" and was a man "widely known in Bridgeport, having been a resident for twenty years." The emphasis on Columbia is understandable given the many recordings Fisher made for the company and the fact that Columbia kept Fisher in its catalog longer than other companies (Columbia even issued Fisher on a double-sided disc). Fisher did record for other companies, including Edison (over two dozen cylinder titles), Berliner (nearly three dozen titles), Zon-O-Phone, and Eldridge R. Johnson's new company, which was not yet named the Victor Talking Machine Company. Fagan and Moran's Encyclopedic Discography of Victor Recordings indicates Fisher recorded 20 titles for Johnson's company on December 5 and 6, 1900.

Fisher recorded for Columbia as late as 1904. His final recordings may have been made

for Columbia or Zon-O-Phone. As early as May 10, 1901, Zon-O-Phone listed in its catalog 14 titles sung by Fisher, and he must have returned to that company's studio since 9-inch green label Zon-O-Phones featuring Fisher exist, which means some Fisher discs are as late as 1904. Zon-O-Phone began issuing 10" Zon-O-Phones in early 1905, and none featuring Fisher are known to have been made.

Ironically, Fisher's recording career ended around the time he moved to Bridgeport. This city was home to Columbia, and perhaps a Columbia employee notified the trade publication of Fisher's death. Consider the manner in which Columbia is mentioned a second time in the article: "He was born in Baltimore...and came to this city with the Columbia Graphophone Co. as a singer." The 15-line article is as much a tribute to Columbia's longevity in the industry as to Fisher. Columbia in 1923 suffered serious financial difficulties. In providing information about Fisher to The Talking Machine World, someone was reminding readers that Columbia had been active for decades, unlike other companies also going into receivership in the 1922 and 1923 period.

The article states, "He possessed a fine tenor voice and gained national recognition as one of the pioneer singers for phonographic records." Fisher was actually a bass or bass-baritone. An 1898 Columbia catalog notes his "basso-cantante voice of unusual power, range and sweetness." Included in the 1898 catalog is "Down Deep Within the Cellar," traditionally associated with bass singers. One early Climax 10" disc of "Wearin' O' the Green" (No. 194) says "bass" on the label, and the spoken announcement identifies Fisher as the singer. On some recordings Fisher is labeled a baritone.

The article states that Fisher, who later in life was an "insurance and real estate dealer," died at age 56, which puts his birth around 1866, the same as Christopher Henry Hudson Booth. It is not known if Booth was the piano accompanist for Fisher on the singer's Victor discs.

Jim Walsh did not write very much about

SONGS BY J. J. FISHER.



Mr. Fisher possesses a basso-cantante voice of unusual power, range and sweetness. His records are remarkable for their naturalness of tone and their superior musical quality, being clear and loud, with the words perfectly enunciated.

Operatic Selections.

- 7133 Armourer's Song, "Robin Hood."
- 7138 Turnkey's Song, "Rob Roy."
- 7142 Oh Promise Me, "Robin Hood."
- 7144 In This Celestial Dwelling, "Magic Flute."
- 7146 Baby, Baby, "Lady Slavey."

Ballads.

- 7103 Anchored.
- 7109 Sailing.

In an 1898 Columbia list loaned by David Rocco.

Fisher, presumably because information on this pioneer has always been scarce. In exploring the possibility that Atwood Twitchell on Zon-O-Phone discs may be a pseudonym, Walsh writes in the October 1956 issue of Hobbies, "I know too little of Fisher to deliver a positive pronouncement, but a 1904 Columbia Record [catalog] seems to dispose of him as a possibility. It says that he had just returned to record making after several years spent in other business, and was 'singing better than ever.' Presumably, then, he wasn't recording in the Twitchell era of 1901-02." Walsh then states that Twitchell may be baritone George Alexander. (My Northern California friends with Twitchell recordings insist the singer was not like any other—they conclude Twitchell is not a pseudonym.)

What was the other business around 1901-02 that took Fisher away from recording? Was he already dealing in insurance and real estate?

Why Stop Recording?

The departure of Fisher from the recording industry around 1901 or so—only to return around 1904, then disappear again—reminds me of various pioneers who give up their recording careers in a seemingly abrupt manner.

We know why some pioneers ceased recording. Roger Harding stopped in 1901 because he died! At times we can guess. Other times we lack facts for making educated guesses.

We do not know for certain why C.H.H. Booth left Victor around 1905 but it is likely that as Victor relied increasingly on orchestral accompaniment, Booth's services were no longer so important. He may have left with no regrets. An accomplished pianist in these years would have viewed working for a record company as "just a job," something that earned a paycheck but brought neither artistic satisfaction nor significant recognition (this is in contrast to some vocalists becoming household names through recordings). Years later Booth accompanied cellist Victor Sorlin on Victor 5773, and the label gives the name



Minnie Emmett is an example of an artist who was popular around the turn of the century (she began with Columbia around 1897), stopped recording (around 1903), then years later recorded. Here she sings the 1910 "All Alone," composed by Will Dillon and Harry Von Tilzer. U.S. Everlasting issued two Emmett titles.

C.H.H. Booth. Coming editions of the Encyclopedic Discography of Victor Recordings will establish how many other Victor discs were made by Booth after 1905. But he no longer worked regularly for Victor.

Technology undoubtedly determined who recorded and when. With the dawn of orchestral accompaniment, which was made possible by improvements in recording and playback technology, fewer pianists were needed (ironically, the acoustic era would end with companies experimenting with piano accompaniment for some singers). Although the advent of orchestral accompaniment was probably the cause of Booth no longer working regularly for Victor, studios still needed house pianists. In an article about Albert Benzler in the January 1954 issue of Hobbies, Walsh writes, "Benzler continued to be a useful man in the Edison recording laboratories as a rehearsal specialist" (emphasis added).

In saying that the state of technology determined who recorded, I have vocalists in mind also. When speculating about why certain singers stopped recording, or significantly reduced their output, or stopped for long periods, we might consider how much some may have owed their initial success to being in the right place at the right time. As time went on, they were less essential to the studios. This may apply to J.J. Fisher. His was a good voice but his success from 1898 to 1901 may have been determined by other qualities.

Technology in the 1890s was crude, and great singers were not necessarily ideal for recording purposes. Important were singers who had not only voices that recorded well but the patience to make recordings. This describes George W. Johnson, who was willing to sing for every company a few songs over and over, with only the advent of the permanent master record bringing an end to his recording career. If artists attempted anything subtle in delivery, it was usually not detected by recording equipment.

It also describes Silas Leachman. Walsh's article on Leachman in the July 1955 issue of Hobbies emphasizes the singer's stamina and versatility. These two qualities were important to a studio (George W. Johnson stands out as an exception in that he was not versatile). Walsh quotes an 1895 Scientific American article that said about Leachman, "[H]e has been practicing loud singing for four years. He has been doing this work until his throat has become calloused so that he no longer becomes exhausted after singing a short time. As soon as he has finished one song he slips off the wax cylinders, puts on three fresh ones without leaving his seat, and goes right on singing until a passing train compels him to stop for a short time." Clearly Leachman's talents were not strictly musical. Walsh also quotes from the October 1905 issue of the English trade journal Talking Machine News. Linzey A. Willcox had written about Leachman, "I believe that musically his records were not a success, but for clearness of words they 'took on' tremendously."

S. H. Dudley was popular in these days of

crude recording technology. His was a good baritone voice but not extraordinary. As technology became more sophisticated, he recorded less often. Did the one development lead to the other? Dudley, or Rous, soon worked more at the executive end of a company, namely Victor. Recording technology by 1902 could do justice to any number of baritones, and more singers were willing to enter a studio.

Was J.J. Fisher a singer whose services were no longer in demand because improved technology meant the studios finally had their pick of any number of singers? As more singers became available on recordings, did buyers show indifference towards Fisher? Presumably companies would have encouraged him to record more if Fisher titles sold well.

The Permanent Master

As we speculate on why Fisher ceased recording, we must also consider how the advent of the permanent master made recording less lucrative for artists such as Fisher, who earlier had been paid to sing during any one session a handful of songs over and over. Masters were used by the late 1890s but they wore out after a few dozen duplicates were made. Edison's gold-moulded cylinder process, introduced in 1902, was revolutionary and disc companies developed ways of creating identical negative stampers (at this time Victor adopted the matrix system and the "sunken," as opposed to "flush," Monarch label). Thereafter, if a song was successfully recorded, an artist was rarely asked to cover it again for a company.

Fisher may have turned to the insurance and real estate business because it paid better. A few artists in the first decade of this century made a living by recording but it took extraordinary commitment. One wonders if Fisher looked with envy or pity at the many recording sessions of, say, Arthur Collins, who began recording around the time Fisher did—and continued for decades.

While considering reasons for Fisher no longer recording, I think about others of his

era. George J. Gaskin's voice recorded better in the 1890s than most voices, but otherwise his was not extraordinary. With improvements in recording and playback technology, studios in time could do justice to many singers. Was Gaskin judged dispensable? Gaskin later made Pathé and Rex discs, which is evidence of his willingness to record, but he was not a recording star after 1904. Billy Heins stopped making solo recordings in 1904. J.W. Myers recorded steadily until around 1905, and then the output was reduced to a trickle, mostly for Columbia (he made Rex recordings in the 'teens, as did Bob Roberts--the company was unusual in hiring several recording artists whose heyday was the turn of the century).

We should also consider changes in musical tastes around this time. Some singers adapted to changes brought to popular music by ragtime and other trends, but others did not. Artists such as Harry Macdonough, Arthur Collins, Steve Porter, and Byron G. Harlan showed an ability to adapt.

I earlier referred to Walsh quoting in the October 1956 issue of Hobbies a passage from a 1904 Columbia catalog stating that Fisher "had just returned to record making after several years spent in other business." It is interesting how many singers ceased recording and later resurfaced, usually working for minor companies. Edward M. Favor stopped recording for a period but resumed towards the end of the single-sided era. None of these sold well. Dan Quinn also dropped out for years but then recorded titles for Victor and Columbia around 1914-15. The Talking Machine World shows a Quinn disc being issued as late as 1918: "Life Is A Merry Go Round," issued on Paramount 2053 in June 1918. Late Quinn records did not sell well.

Perhaps some artists for whom we now have little information stopped recording because they moved from the New York-New Jersey area, the industry's heart. Quentin Riggs reports that in 1901 A.D. Madeira moved to Minnesota--he was too far from studios to continue recording. George H. Broderick recorded prolifically at the century's turn, but in 1900 he moved to Chicago. He secured opera and concert work in Chicago, as he

had in New York, but Chicago did not offer the same recording opportunities.

We know little today about artists such as George P. Watson, J.W. Myers, George Graham. We know even less about John Terrill and Jere Mahoney. Cornetist A.L. Sweet's recording career ended around this time. He toured with his own band into the late 1930s, so why did he not return to a recording studio? I raise questions here about the pioneer days of recording and admit that answers are not easy to find a century later.

SONGS BY WILL F. DENNY.



Mr. Will F. Denny's comic songs are sung with dash and spirit and in an entirely original vein. His work is a standard.

- 6301 Oh, Don't It Tickle You.
- 6304 You Can't Think of Everything
- 6305 She Was There.
- 6306 I Didn't Know 'Till Afterwards.
- 6309 I Couldn't.
- 6310 Three Girls in a Boat.
- 6311 They Don't Speak to One Another Now.
- 6313 Enoch Brown.
- 6314 Jones, Smith and Brown.
- 6315 The Shadows on the Door, laughing song.
- 6316 All Doing a Little Bit.
- 6317 You Can Tell Where He Has Been.
- 6318 And the Parrot Said.
- 6319 It's Another Color Now.
- 6320 Like a Girl.
- 6321 Never Mind the Moon, John.
- 6322 I've No Use For It.
- 6323 He's Got Them Again, By Jingo.
- 6324 When a Woman Loves.
- 6325 A Pity to Waste It.

The next V78J will discuss a cassette sent by Larry Jeannette. From a collection of clean Pink Lambert and brown wax cylinders, he made a 90-minute master DAT tape. Among the 39 numbers is Will F. Denny's "Ain't That A Shame." Other artists include George W. Johnson, J.W. Myers, Nicholas Scholl, Frank Kennedy, Gilmore's Band. A cassette copy is available by sending \$14 to P & L Antiques, 727 Sutter St., Folsom CA 95630.

Early Cylinders at the Edison National Historic Site

Introduction By Tim Gracyk, With Jerry Fabris and Peter Dilg

In October 1995, Thomas Edison made the news. It happened soon after Jerry Fabris, who is curator of sound recordings at the Edison National Historic Site, and two colleagues made analog and digital recordings of 43 fragile, one-of-a-kind cylinders of the late 1880s. In this group was one from 1888 featuring the voice of a 41 year old Thomas Edison addressing the politician James Gillespie Blaine, who was a presidential candidate in 1888. Blaine had traveled abroad extensively in 1887 and 1888, returning to the United States in August 1888. Edison talks about traveling via the phonograph, signing off with the words "Uh, goodbye, Edison." His speech lasts 154 seconds.

Last year newspapers widely reported this discovery of Edison's voice on such an old cylinder. Until now, archivists had believed that a 1906 cylinder was the earliest surviving recording of his voice. Edison did not often record. According to an article in the April 1898 issue of The Ladies Home Journal, Edison told friends, "It would make me sick with disgust to see placarded on phonographs everywhere I turn: 'Drop a nickel in the slot and hear Edison talk.'"

This 1898 article states, "In perfecting the phonograph he has, of course, been obliged to talk into the machine frequently, but the cylinder is always scraped so that his voice cannot be reproduced. To one close friend, however, he reluctantly gave a cylinder recording a few of his words, and to another, on which is recorded his favorite story. These are the only two in existence." Where are these two cylinders today? Their descriptions do not match the contents of the 1888 cylinder.

In early 1995, the Wizard of Menlo Park had been in the news for a different reason. Edison's name had become prominent in debates that followed the release of the government-sponsored "National Standards for History" report, which gave guidelines about what historical events and figures should be taught to all American students. Conservative political commentators, de-

crying what they perceived as a leftist bias, cited that the report six times mentions Harriet Tubman, who led slaves to freedom, but is silent about Thomas Edison, Paul Revere, and others who have been traditionally taught in history classes.

Perhaps reporters, having covered the earlier history standards debate, gave special coverage to the discovery of a young Edison on a cylinder as if to declare that he is an important American figure. Nobody can charge the allegedly "liberal" media with ignoring or neglecting Edison!

Accounts of the 1888 cylinder featuring Edison's voice established this was one of a group. What were those other cylinders? Jerry Fabris and Peter Dilg have supplied that information.

On August 27, 1995, 43 wax cylinders were carefully transported from the Edison National Historic Site to the Rodgers & Hammerstein Archives of Recorded Sound, located at the New York Public Library for the Performing Arts at Lincoln Center. Here they were played for identifying contents and for making archival copies with modern recording technology. Only in a few instances was it necessary to play a cylinder more than once to make a successful archival copy.

Fabris supervised the project and was also responsible for written and photographic documentation. Dilg, a cylinder expert, was entrusted with the handling and dusting of cylinders (a camel hair brush was used), and he provided technical advice. Adrian Cosentini, Chief Audio Engineer at the Rodgers & Hammerstein Archives, was responsible for re-recording what was on the cylinders.

The cylinders were played on a custom-made cylinder playback machine designed for the R & H Archives by Art Schiffrin and equipped with three basic speeds--120, 150 and 175 rpm. Dilg was unable to make precise speed adjustments as one might on a vintage machine. Sound engineers can make adjustments to speed when mastering tapes from that recording session.

These cylinders have special historic value

and might never be played again. Perhaps a future generation of archivists will listen to these cylinders only when laser technology can read the information in the grooves.

They may be the oldest wax cylinders. Older recordings exist on tin foil but until there is a way to play tin foil without harming the foil itself, they will remain mystery recordings. One other older recording is on the mandrel of an 1878 Frank Lambert machine owned by Aaron Cramer.

Presumably the cylinders were played over a century ago. Some were played again in the 1950s. In this group is the famous October 5, 1888 speech by Sir Arthur Sullivan congratulating Edison on his "wonderful discovery." It was reissued on the LP The Sound of Fame in the early '60s and is now on Pearl's The Art of The Savoyard (GEMM CD 9991). David Banks discusses Sullivan's speech in Issue 2 of V78J. Fabris discovered that what is reissued is only part of a longer speech by Sullivan. Sullivan would soon help introduce the phonograph to the Prince of Wales—see Sullivan's diary entry for January 18, 1889, reprinted in Arthur Jacobs' Arthur Sullivan: A Victorian Musician.

Many were made under the supervision of Colonel George Edward Gouraud, Edison's agent whose home in England was called Little Menlo. Edison entrusted Gouraud with promoting his inventions—not merely the phonograph—in England. After making recordings in England, Gouraud shipped them to Edison. The fact that music was recorded at the Crystal Palace and in Westminster Abbey indicates that the early cylinder recorder was valued for its portability.

A few cylinders were obviously recorded in the United States—Edward Issler's Orchestra (Walter Miller supervised this session), a soprano named Effie Stewart (supervised by Edison employee Theo E. Wangemann), Edison himself.

Aside from the Sullivan speech, none of these cylinders from 1888 and 1889 had been reissued. Researchers have long known that Colonel Gouraud made cylinders for promotional purposes and for communicating with Edison. Chapter 28 of Oliver Read and Walter Welch's

From Tin Foil To Stereo discusses Gouraud's Little Menlo recordings and also the discovery of rare white wax cylinders at the Edison National Historic Site in June 1953 (Read and Welch are not specific about contents or how many were discovered). In any case, nobody before reported the existence of an 1888 cylinder with Edison addressing Blaine.

Slips of paper are glued onto the wooden posts that hold the cylinders. Who originally wrote the information is unknown, nor is it known when it was put on paper—a century ago seems likely since some information is not to be found on the recordings themselves, such as Miller making one cylinder and Wangemann making another. The writer noted contents as well as speeds ranging from 120 to 195 rpm. That Edison speaks on one cylinder is noted: "Thos. A. Edison—Talking from N.Y. to Buffalo—Buffalo to Chicago, etc. etc. Made in 1888." It is surprising that this cylinder's existence was not widely reported by those who reissued the Sullivan cylinder a few decades ago.

On August 27, 1995, the cylinders were generally played at slightly slower speeds than the noted speeds. The stylus used was a .0037 inch truncated diamond.

Dilg reports that condition varied, with a dozen or so sounding clear and brilliant, others barely audible, the rest in between these extremes. Inaudible is one marked "Gladstone" (Edison had been eager for William Gladstone to record a "phonogram"). It once played well enough for someone to identify it as featuring Gladstone. Was it irrevocably harmed when played some time ago?

How often the cylinders were played over a century ago is unknown. At some point they were stored and forgotten, rediscovered in Edison's library in the 1950s, then stored until technology and funding could make possible their safe re-recording. They date from the time wax blanks were first used, some aging better than others. Dilg notes that, due to chemicals used for the blanks, the cylinders have a unique smell. All are white wax except the last cylinder featuring Westminster Abbey's organ. It is brown wax and may be a copy of an earlier cylinder.

The cylinders' contents are now on analog and digital tapes, and that 1995 recording session was only the beginning of a larger project. In coming years archival copies will be made of all one-of-a-kind cylinders stored at the Edison National Historic Site. Fabris began with these 43 cylinders because here was a large group of similar make and vintage. At the site are different types of cylinders requiring different playback equipment.

Here, in quote marks, are the words on paper glued to wooden posts in the boxes that have held the 43 cylinders for decades.

- 1) "The phonograph's welcome to London Press, August 14, 1888, at Little Menlo."
- 2) "Piano and cornet"--the song is *The Lost Chord*.
- 3) "Talks to Mr. Edison."
- 4) "London Press congratulations to Mr. Edison."
- 5) "London Press congratulations to Mr. Edison, Mr. Broadley continued."
- 6) "Soft piano solo by Mrs. Eyre."
- 7) "Col Gouraud & Mrs. Tomlinson to Mr. Edison."
- 8) "Piano solo"
- 9) "Letter to Mr. Edison from Col. Gouraud, August 14, Little Menlo."
- 10) "Very loud with funnel--Phonograph talks with Mr. Edison"
- 11) "Letter from Col. Gouraud to Mr. Edison, August 17, 1888."
- 12) "Piano solo by Mrs. Eyre."
- 13) "Loud--Letter from Col. Gouraud to Edison."
- 14) "Handel Festival at Crystal Palace."
- 15) "Mr. Mann's to Mr. Edison--Theo. Thomas."
- 16) "Conversation between Col. Gouraud and Mr. E.T. Gilliland."
- 17) "Handel Festival at Crystal Palace--chorus of 4,000 voices recorded with phono. over 100 yards away."
- 18) "Whistling by Mrs. Shaw, Aug. 14, Little Menlo."
- 19) "Col. Gouraud introducing to Edison the representatives of the London Press."
- 20) "Cheers to Mr. Edison by London Press, August 14, Little Menlo."
- 21) "Fifth Regiment March--by Issler's Orchestra--March 1889. Taken by W.H. Miller."
- 22) "Soprano--sung by Effie Stewart--Jan. 1889. Taken by Theo E. Wangemann."
- 23) "Thos. A. Edison--Talking from N.Y. to Buffalo--Buffalo to Chicago, etc., etc. Made in 1888."
- 24) "Lord Mayor of London to Edison."
- 25) "Queen Ann's Lodge speeches."
- 26) "Queen Ann's Lodge speeches."
- 27) "Queen Ann's Lodge speeches."
- 28) "After dinner toast at Little Menlo." This includes the voice of Sir Arthur Sullivan.
- 29) "Mr. Raikes, Postmaster General to Edison."
- 30) "Col. Gouraud at Inventor's Institute."
- 31) "After dinner toast at Little Menlo."

32) "Mr. Wood and Mr. Dredge to Mr. Edison."

33) "After dinner toast at Little Menlo."

34) "After dinner toast at Little Menlo."

35) "Col. Gouraud to Mr. Edison."

36) "After dinner speech--Col. Gouraud--loud."

37) "Mr. Broadley and Mr. Parkinson to Edison."

38) "Gladstone."

39) "Song and piano." Two unidentified men sing horribly--saved because they were famous?

40) No title.

41) "Col. Gouraud."

42) "After dinner speech at Little Menlo."

43) "Organ solo played on the Grand Organ, Westminster Abbey by Professor Bridge--Mus. Doc. & Gresham Professor of Music; organist Westminster Abbey."

Transcript of The 1888 Cylinder Recording: *Thomas Alva Edison Speaking To Mr. Blaine*

Uh, now, Mr. Blaine, as you've been nearly around the world, I'll take you 'round the world on the phonograph. I'll not charge you anything.

I'll take you on a steamer, eh, a Cunard steamer to Liverpool, and from Liverpool to London, from London on the London & Brighton Railroad to Brighton, and from Brighton we'll go on those little two-cent steamers across the English Channel to Calais. And from Calais we'll go on the *chemin du fer du nord*. I can't give you the exact Parisian pronunciation of this railroad, but I guess you'll understand it.

We'll get into Paree [Paris] and make for the, uh, Grand Hotel. And then in the morning we'll go to our bankers and get you some money on our letters of credit. And then we'll go and stay around Paree for about two weeks and go to Berlin. After we've stayed about two, three days in Berlin and got the blues, why, we'll go to St. Petersburg. And St. Petersburg we'll go to Moscow, and from Moscow back by the same route to Berlin. And from Berlin we'll go to Vienna and from Vienna to Budapest to see the Hungarians.

And then most people would go to Monte Carlo. But we'll not go to Monte Carlo. We'll go

to Munich, or München. I believe they call it München. But that's not a very nice name to me. I, ah, I like to call it Munich. Well, then from Munich we'll go to Milan. Milan we'll go to, uh, Rome. Rome we'll go across the Mediterranean Sea. I don't know but what I'm a little out on my geography, we'll go to Alexandria.

Alexandria to - through the Suez Canal to the Red Sea, into the Bay of Bengal. And then to, uh, Bombay. Bombay we'll probably get the, uh, choleree [cholera], and stay at the hospital two, three months and have lots of fun. And then we'll go to Calcutta, Calcutta to Singapore on the Malay archipelago. And then to Hong Ko-- to Hong Kong [cough]. Hong Kong to Tokyo, Tokyo on a Pacific Mail Steamship Company to San Francisco, San Francisco to, uh, Ogden, Ogden to, uh, Laramie, Laramie to Cheyenne, Cheyenne to Omaha, Omaha to Chicago, Chicago through Pittsburgh, Harrisburg, Philadelphia, New York.

Now, Mr. Blaine, won't you say a few words on another cylinder so my young man can bring it over to the laboratory? I want to put it through a process to get, uh, several hundred duplicate cylinders so other people can hear what you say. Uh, goodbye, Edison.

The Delpheon Talking Machine

By Ronald J. Putz

The Delpheon Company was one of many phonograph manufacturers that sprang up during the World War I era and slightly thereafter. I have a special interest in Delpheon machines because they were made in my hometown of Bay City, Michigan. I have been able to learn much about the company by studying its advertisements, examining a few Delpheon machines, and interviewing descendants of Charles J. Bousfield, president of the Delpheon Company.

Bousfield was not involved with the machine at its inception. The Hough Organ Company, located at 811 Boutell Place, made a

Delpheon prototype by mid-1916. A Bay City newspaper of July 5, 1916 announced that the machine was on display in the windows of the local Bay City Cash Store.

When production began, the machine's first distributor was Bay City's Milliken-White Company. A local firm, the Westover-Kamm Company, produced the first cabinets.

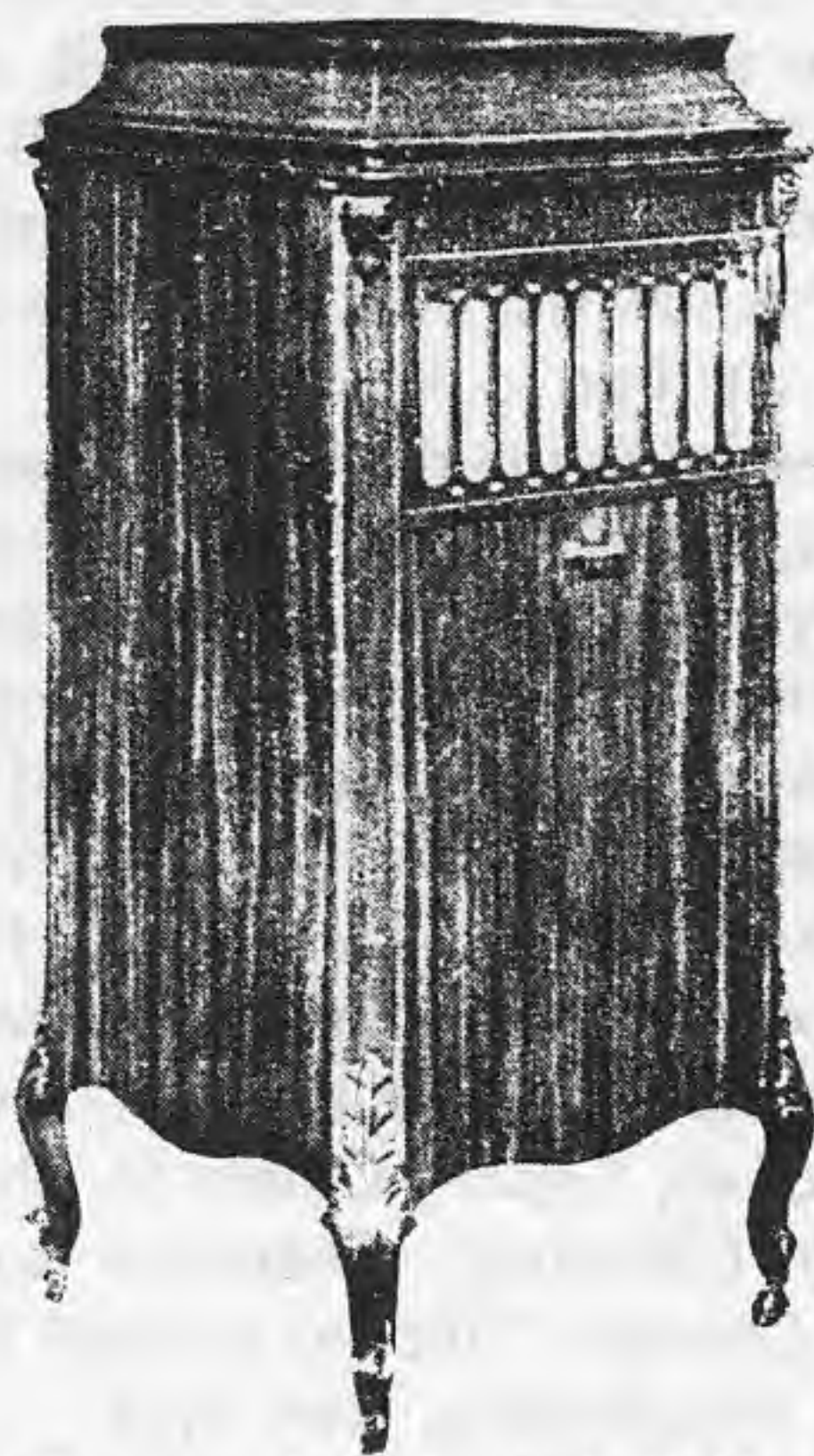
Charles J. Bousfield soon took an interest. He was the son of a well-to-do manufacturer of wooden pails, tubs and bowls. Demand for these products was declining, so Bousfield looked for other products to manufacture. He saw that talking machines were selling well and by July 21, 1916 bought the Hough Organ Company, including its factory and property located on Boutell Place, Bay City.

In September 1916, Delpheon demonstrations were held in the Milliken-White Recital Hall. The earliest models sold for \$100. Soon, fancier models sold at \$125 and \$150. Cabinets were made of mahogany, golden oak, fumed oak, and American walnut.

The first Delpheon advertisement in The Talking Machine World appeared on page 58 in the November 1916 issue. The Model C is shown, and Delpheon's advertising slogan was "The phonograph with an individuality!" Claims are made that the machine "plays 3 to 7 records with one winding" (the small Emerson was popular at this time--perhaps 7 Emersons?) and that the machine "plays any Record." Machines featured a "tone modulator" (later called a Modunome) that "shades music while playing." It is similar to the Graduola control device on Aeolian-Vocalion machines sold later.

In 1917 the Rechlin Hardware Company located at 817-819 Washington Avenue became Delpheon's sole distributor in Bay County, Michigan. A section of the store's second floor was used to display Delpheon machines, and much money was spent on advertisements in the

The Delpheon



The Phonograph with an Individuality.
MADE IN BAY CITY.

Everywhere and on every occasion, this Instrument should furnish the enjoyment.

It is a creation of wonder. Its tone is incomparable.

RECHLIN HARDWARE CO.

Bay City Times-Tribune.

The Delpheon Company was incorporated on May 7, 1917. Charles J. Bousfield was president, his wife Nellie B. Bousfield was vice-president, and their son Charles B. Bousfield was secretary-treasurer. R.W. Gresser was sales manager. Common stock of \$100,000 was offered but only \$60,200 was sold. By 1919 Delpheon had sales representatives in New York City (25 Church St.), Boston (28 Court Square), and Dallas (703 Bush Building).

Display rooms were opened in Chicago on the sixth floor of the Republic Building by September 1917, according to that month's issue of The Talking Machine World, which also reported that "every effort is being made to catch up with all outstanding orders." This statement about the company working hard to meet all orders need not be taken seriously. Many similar statements are in the trade journal, with some companies undoubtedly trying to sound more prosper-

ous and successful than they really were.

Not everything needed for the Delpheon was manufactured in Bay City. Mechanisms for early Delpheons were purchased from A.E. Meiselbach & Brother of Newark, New Jersey. A Delpheon catalog was printed in November 1917, as announced in that month's issue of The Talking Machine World, but not a single copy is known to exist. If any V78J reader has a Delpheon catalog, I would gladly pay for a xeroxed copy. Models at that time were the L, Q, A, B, and C, ranging in price from \$75 to \$175.

Around July 1918 larger models appeared, including the William & Mary at \$200. The Heppelwhite model—probably the company's sole console—was introduced in the January 1918 issue of T.M.W. Perhaps because of war shortages, prices for models increased. The Model C is priced at \$215 in an advertisement in the December 1919 issue of T.M.W.

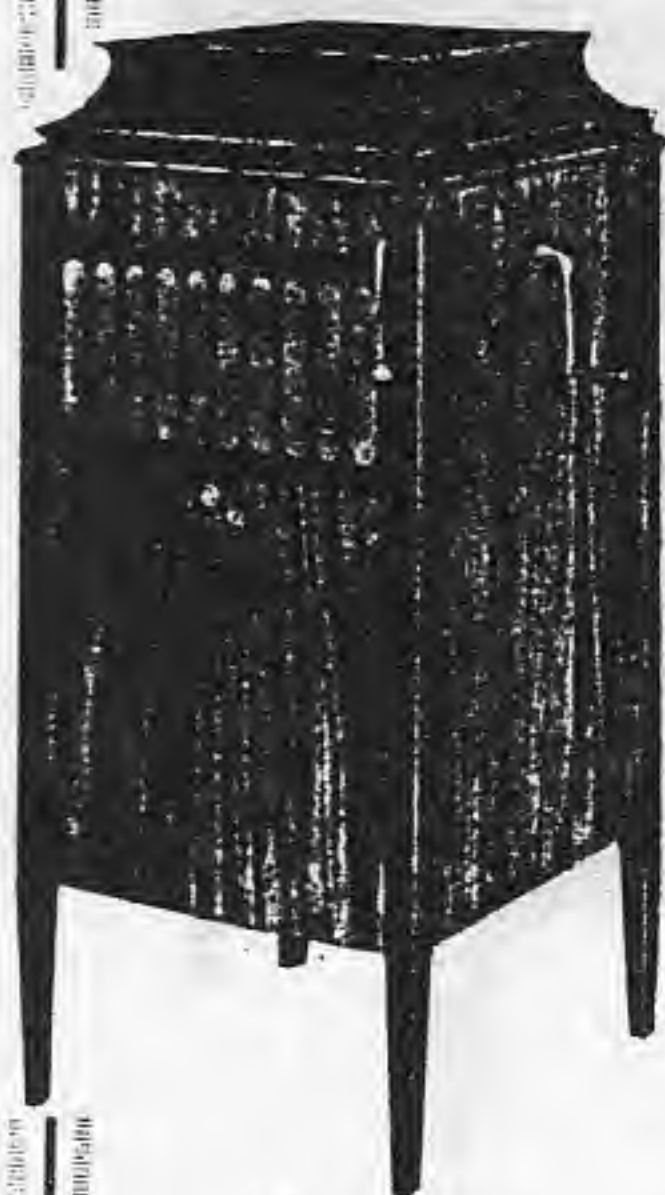
When the Model L was introduced at \$75,



Delpheon



ARE YOU READY?



Model "O"
Price, \$100

Complete with Delpheon record file, modunome, two sound boxes — one for lateral and one for vertical cut records — automatic stop, automatic cover support, tone arm rest, tilting motor board, two spring motor and all other Delpheon features.

EVERY indication points to a bigger demand for phonographs this fall than last year. Business this summer has exceeded that of the same period last year.

ARE you ready?

DON'T wait for the demand to catch you unprepared. Don't make it necessary for your prospects to go elsewhere for what they want. And don't place all the responsibility at the last moment on the manufacturer. Play safe.

BUT, don't act until you hear and see the DELPHEON. Such tone and harmony you never heard before—you never dreamed it possible. DELPHEON reproduction is so natural it is impossible to distinguish it from the original. It is the one instrument that will sell in competition with all others no matter how the comparison is made. It is the instrument that appeals to the most exacting.

Put the DELPHEON to the test—any test. It won't cost you anything to try it.

And now is the time to find out.

THE DELPHEON COMPANY
BAY CITY, MICHIGAN

Eastern Distributors:

DELPHEON SALES COMPANY
31 Church St., New York City
(Will be opened Sept. 1st)

VERBECK MUSICAL SALES CO.
435 William St., Buffalo

it was promoted as being "incomparable!" In January 1919 an electric powered Model L was placed on the market at \$110. The Model D was soon afterwards introduced at \$225.

The 1920 Michigan Annual (Financial) Report was submitted by the Delpheon Company on July 26, 1921 (for the year ending December 31, 1920). The value of the company's real estate was given as \$37,697.38; goods and merchandise as \$32,962.73; cash on hand as well as in the bank totaled only \$409.73. The figure for total assets was \$126,909.27; total liabilities was only \$40,931.90. Aside from Bousfield family members, only 18 people were stockholders. According to Delpheon's final Annual Report, filed on August 30, 1921 (for the period up to June 30, 1921), the company had an accumulated deficit of \$17,144.77. Around this time \$7,900.25 had been borrowed to keep the company afloat.

The company failed around 1922 but it

evidently did not go through bankruptcy. Family members suggest the Bousfields absorbed the loss. The company must have formally failed prior to September 1924 since it did not file a 1922 Annual Report. The Michigan Archives contain all Delpheon reports and they show that the company never had a profitable year. In the mid-1920s the Berdan Bread Company took over the building, which itself was razed around 1950.

The company never used metal plaques stating models or giving serial numbers. It is unknown how many Delpheons were produced.

I know of five Delpheons in collectors' hands. If a V78 reader owns a Delpheon or has company literature, please contact me at 201 Salzburg Avenue, Bay City, MI 48706. I own some Delpheon items—even a 10" Delpheon record sleeve and a box for a Delpheon reproducer (Delpheon put its name on some reproducers)—and wish to learn more about the company.



Far More Than a Phonograph

THE NEW DELPHEON and the WONDERFUL "MODUNOME," through its magic-like silken cord, transmit your own personal feelings to every strain of music coming from the instrument.

America's 'Little Record' Fad

by Allan Sutton

Beginning in 1914, several record manufacturers set out to prove that bigger wasn't necessarily better. For the next four years, American record buyers were treated to a parade of inexpensive, diminutive discs all claiming to rival their full-sized counterparts. The public loved the concept, at least until the novelty wore off.

Small-diameter discs were nothing new, of course. Until 1902, 7" discs dominated the market. But by 1906, the 10" disc had become standard, and manufacturers were quick to phase out the smaller (and less profitable) sizes.

The Little Wonder Phenomenon

The label that rekindled the public's interest in small, inexpensive records was Little Wonder, a single-sided 5" disc manufactured by Columbia for the Little Wonder Record Co. of New York.

At a time when the cheapest double-sided discs sold for 75¢, Henry Waterson, president of the music publishing firm of Waterson, Berlin & Snyder, saw the need for an inexpensive record. Waterson founded Little Wonder in 1914, and his trademark application claimed use of the Little Wonder trademark beginning on September 1 of that year.

Little Wonder's history has been covered in detail in Tim Brooks' excellent *New Amberola Graphic* article (#28, Spring 1979). To recap briefly, Little Wonder announced its first releases in October 1914, and the label became an overnight sensation. Sears, Roebuck & Co. offered the discs in its catalogs from early 1915 through the autumn of 1921, and other dealers gave the records away as premiums with the purchase of other merchandise.

Despite appearances, Little Wonder was not a children's record. Its repertoire ran the gamut from musical comedy hits and dance numbers to necessarily abbreviated operatic arias. Most featured

popular Columbia studio stars or instrumental groups under the direction of Charles A. Prince, but Little Wonder's practice of suppressing performers' names has led to a long-standing guessing game among collectors. Among the few stage personalities represented on Little Wonder are Al Jolson (on a single release, #20), Rhoda Bernard, Frank Crumit, and Wilbur Sweatman's Original Jazz Band. Contrary to some published accounts, Little Wonder masters were not dubbed from existing Columbia masters, nor was the performer on a given Little Wonder title necessarily the same as on the corresponding Columbia title.

Little Wonder's success inevitably invited competition. In 1916, Waterson was sued by Victor H. Emerson (president of the then-newly formed Emerson Phonograph Co.), who had been involved in the conception and development of the



The label that started the "little record" fad:
Little Wonder, from a 1918 flyer

label while still a Columbia employee. The initial verdict in Emerson's favor, involving a settlement of \$46,486.59, was overturned on appeal in 1918, but in the meantime Waterson divested himself of the label, turning it over to Columbia, which operated Little Wonder as a separate division.

Little Wonder's sales declined sharply after 1917, and many of the later titles are hard to find today. Although I haven't found a formal announcement of the label's demise, song titles date the last Little Wonder releases to 1923.

John Fletcher's Operaphone

Next on the "little record" scene was John Fletcher, a musician-turned-inventor who founded the Operaphone Manufacturing Corp. of New York late in 1914. Fletcher's trademark application claimed use of the Operaphone name beginning March 1, 1915. Fletcher will be the subject of an upcoming *V78J* article, but a brief summary of his early operation is in order here.

Its name aside, Operaphone featured ordinary popular and light classical fare. Fletcher initially produced fine-groove vertical 7" discs, which were soon replaced by an 8" series. In its earliest incarnation, Operaphone coupled dissimilar selections—backing a current vaudeville hit with a concert selection, for example—a misguided philosophy that had failed for Columbia several years earlier.

Early Operaphone pressings bore paint-filled incised labels, but Fletcher announced 35¢ paper-labeled 8" pressings in the *Talking Machine World* for August 15, 1916, which noted that "since the first of the year, the demand for Operaphone records has increased at a rapid rate, with the result that the output of the company's plant in Long Island City has been trebled in that time."

Some of that increased production undoubtedly included custom labels. Operaphone was the source of several obscure fine-groove brands (including All Star, Elginola, and early versions of the Crescent and Domestic labels) produced

c.1915–1917. In Canada, 8" Operaphone discs were sold for 50¢ by the Canadian Phonograph Company (103 Yonge Street, Toronto), which had taken over rights to the Best-Phone, an early universal-arm machine that played lateral as well as fine-groove vertical discs.

The public showed little interest in Operaphone's small-diameter offerings, which were plagued by technical problems, and in 1917 Operaphone discontinued its smaller discs in favor of 10" pressings from other sources.

Emerson Enters the Market

Victor Hugo Emerson, Columbia's veteran general recording manager, announced formation of the Emerson Phonograph Co., Inc. in *The Talking*

THERE ARE

8

REASONS

for handling

Emerson Records

Selections for **\$1⁰⁰**



REASON
No 1

UNIVERSAL CUT

Emerson Records can be played on all phonographs, only one hill and dale machine requiring an attachment.

Emerson Records are "hill-and-dale" and "zig-zag" cuts made into one. The invention of this double reproduction process was Victor H. Emerson's and is owned exclusively by the Emerson Phonograph Company.

Consider the superior usefulness of Emerson Records—all types thrown into one—ready for any machine—to play for everybody—anywhere. No attachments, no fussing, no spoiling machine or records. That's why Emerson Records sell.

From *The Talking Machine World*, May 15, 1917

Machine World for May 15, 1915. Probably inspired by the success of Little Wonder, he entered into an unusual agreement with the Pathé Frères Phonograph Co. to produce a 25¢ record. The 6" vertically cut green-label Emerson discs were transcribed (usually in edited form) from European Pathé cylinder masters and featured such notables as Enrico Caruso (#301, in a dubbing from a 1903 Anglo-Italian Commerce Company cylinders), Florencio Constantino, and Harry Lauder, all of whom were under exclusive Columbia or

Victor contracts in the United States. The series was soon discontinued, and by August 1916 Emerson was advertising the closeout of his vertically cut stock: "As we have discontinued the manufacture of this type of record and are now concentrating on the Emerson universal-cut discs...we will dispose of any or part of this lot, minimum quantity of 1,000, at 4¢ each."

With the Pathé connection severed, Emerson began to record his own masters using the "universal" groove originally patented in 1899 by George T. Smallwood and assigned to Emerson in 1915. The 45-degree groove wall, modulated in both the vertical and horizontal planes, could be played on all types of phonograph, albeit with mediocre results. Emerson described the universal cut more colorfully, as "hill-and-dale and zig-zag cuts made into one." He initially offered 6" single-sided and 7" double-sided universal-cut discs (the latter priced at 25¢ each, or 30¢ each on the West Coast), but discontinued the 6" series after approximately 200 issues.

In an August 1916 advertisement that foreshadowed Edison's "Flashes from Broadway" campaign of several years later, Emerson boasted, "Three Weeks from Broadway to Your Store. While other manufacturers take *months* to release a new number—we take *weeks*. Broadway's stamp of approval is our cue to act." Emerson's 1917 catalog claimed a monthly output of over 1.25 million 7" discs, a figure that seems exaggerated given the relative scarcity of these records today.

As with Little Wonder, the public soon lost interest in the small discs, and Emerson discontinued his 7" and 9" lines by the end of 1919, although the company continued to record 7" masters for the Melodisc label and several specialty brands into the early 1920s.

Majestic and Domino

Two particularly aggressive, but short-lived, players in the little-record saga were the Majestic



New 9-in., 4½-Minute, 50c Record
Another remarkable value! Another demonstration that the MAJESTIC is making the retailing of Records a big, profitable business.
 This new Record is nine and a quarter inches in diameter, plays four and a half to five and a half minutes, and retails with full margin at 50c. Now ready for delivery.

WHY?

The Majestic Record is revolutionizing the record business and dominating the popular priced record field. Its tonal quality compares with the best, regardless of price.
 The Majestic Record eliminates surface noise. It is cut 165 threads to the inch and plays longer than most 10 and 12 inch records on the market.
 It embraces all that is best in the world's musical literature and of all the popular artists.
 Majestic Records are made of the very best stock and its wearing qualities are unsurpassed.

60 New Titles Monthly
SEND FOR CATALOG—TODAY

The Majestic Adaptor
is a universal attachment which, by a simple turn of the sound box, enables you to play ANY STYLE RECORD.

IMPORTANT
We Give Immediate Deliveries
Majestic Record Corporation, 37-39 E. 28th St., New York City

From *The Talking Machine World*, October 15, 1916

Record Corp. and the Domino Phonograph Co., both of New York.

Founded in August 1916, the Majestic Record Corp. maintained offices and showrooms at 37–39 East 28th Street and a factory at 247–253 West 19th Street. The company originally marketed 7" etched-label fine-groove vertically cut Majestic discs for 25¢ each. Its first and last offering of 7" discs, listed in the November 1916 *Talking Machine World*, consisted of 150 releases by the usual studio free-lance artists, including several sides by the venerable Dan W. Quinn.

A 9" Majestic disc, sold for 50¢ and advertised as playing for 5 minutes, was announced in the same month, and Majestic promised to release sixty new titles monthly, but a listing in the February 1918 *TMW* seems to have been its last. In an August, 1916 advertisement, Majestic had predicted, "The demand for a lower priced record is even greater than it was a year ago. Probably the greatest factor in bringing about this change will be the Majestic record." But the public wasn't enthusiastic, and Majestic soon vanished.

Although it was once thought that Operaphone supplied pressings to Majestic, we are now less certain of the label's source. The 1916 *Talking Machine World* trade directory claims that Majes-



Think of the Millions Who Want the Most for Their Dollars

A phonograph is somewhat like an automobile. The initial cost is only the beginning. How many thousands on thousands would buy phonographs if they could afford the up-keep?

Everyone knows that the biggest thrill of the phonograph is the "new record."

Do you realize that most of the families in your town can afford Domino records that give six new selections for a one dollar bill? That most of these families are not now your customers? That here is a huge profitable field that you can cultivate with a little effort?

Learn to Sell Domino Records

The Domino has the double appeal of quality and popular price. The quality comes first and the price is set as low as that quality can be sold for. It is a seven-inch, double-disc, vertical cut record playing on all machines equipped with a universal tone arm and on other machines with the use of a simple adaptor. It plays as long as the average ten-inch record of other makes, namely, from two and one-half to three minutes. It is convenient to handle, easy to ship and deliver, very durable. It opens a wealth of new business possibilities.

Special Introductory Offer

For \$10.00 we will send to new customers only, express prepaid, a varied selection of 48 of our best selling records, hangers, price cards, twenty-five catalogs and six Domino display easels.

Secure your Domino agency now and be ready for the big holiday business.

Complete catalog on request

THE W. R. ANDERSON COMPANY

220 Fifth Avenue

NEW YORK

From *The Talking Machine World*, October 15, 1916

tic manufactured its own records, and the 9" series, at least, appears to be unique.

The story of the first Domino label—not to be confused with the more common 1920s product of the same name—is equally unclear. This rare and apparently short-lived 7" fine-groove vertical-cut brand was marketed by the W.R. Anderson Company of 220 5th Avenue, New York. Anderson advertised heavily in 1916, touting its Domino records in trade publications. Anderson and Domino are listed in the 1916 *Talking Machine World* trade directories, but both are conspicuously absent from the following year's listings.

One specimen has been inspected, but its source isn't apparent, suggesting that the company did indeed manufacture its own product.

The *Talking Machine World* trade directory noted that Anderson was "sole distributor for Domino records, manufactured by the Domino Phonograph Co., New York City."

Domino discs sold for 35¢ each, or three for \$1. The discs employed a fine-groove vertical cut, and an August 1916 *Talking Machine World* advertisement claimed that the records played "as long as the ordinary ten-inch record now on the market."

In September 1916, Domino took a full-page ad to proclaim, "The future of the Domino...record is assured. The public likes it." Apparently that was not the case, if rarity is any indication.

Henry Burr, Fred Van Eps, and the Par-O-Ket Record

Surprisingly few early recording stars were involved in the production of their own records, but Henry Burr and Fred Van Eps were among the exceptions. Burr and Van Eps incorporated the Paroquette Record Manufacturing Corp. in 1916 and claimed use of the Par-O-Ket trademark beginning on August 14 of that year. A studio and pressing plant were located in the Bush Terminal Building, Brooklyn.

Paroquette manufactured 7" etched-label, fine-groove vertical-cut Par-O-Ket discs, which were marketed by the Brown Specialty Company (36 South State Street, Chicago). The company produced at least two Par-O-Ket series: a popular series, beginning at #1 and running into the low 100s, and a catch-all standard, classical, and foreign-language series numbered in the 500s. Sold for 25¢ each, Par-O-Ket records featured Burr, Van Eps, and other popular New York-based studio free-lancers. The company recruited Walter B. Rogers, former director of the Victor Orchestra, as its musical director and house conductor.

Despite an active and up-to-date catalog, Par-O-Ket records seem to have sold poorly. No new releases were announced after January 1918, a month that saw an uncharacteristic flurry of Italian vocal recordings. Paroquette's end came in May of that year, when the *Talking Machine World* advertised an assignee's sale of the company's assets, including 30,000 Par-O-Ket discs. Some

ASSIGNEE'S SALE

Paroquette Record Mfg. Company's Assets

Supreme Court: Kings County, New York.

In the matter of the General Assignment for the benefit of creditors of the Paroquette Record Mfg. Company, Inc., Notice is hereby given that the undersigned Assignee will sell at public auction, through Joseph Feldstein, Auctioneer, on Wednesday, the 22nd day of May, 1918, at 10.30 A. M. at Model Loft Building No. 1, Rink Terminal Building, between 2nd and 3rd Avenues, 37th St., Borough of Brooklyn, City of Brooklyn, New York, property and assets of the above estate, consisting of a complete plant for the Recording and Manufacture of Phonograph Records, consisting of:

Hydraulic Record Presses, Moulds, Rings, etc.
Steam Tables, etc.
Accumulator, Pump, and Tank complete.
Auto Shellac Grinder, etc.
16" x 48" Mixing Mill, Blanking Rolls, Cooling Tables, etc.
Tumbler, and complete mixing outfit.
Recording and Shaving Machines and complete recording equipment.
Plating Tanks, Trimmers, etc.
Complete Machine Shop equipment.
Lathes, Drill Presses, etc.
Complete equipment for making and melting wax.
Complete Etching equipment, camera, chemicals, etc.
Edging Machines.
Generators 500 Amp. and 1000 Amp. Motors, Fans, etc.
Switchboards, Rheostats, etc.
Pipes, Valves, Tanks, etc.
20,000 Par-O-Ket Records, Phonographs, etc.
Master and Mother Matrices.
Office Furniture, Desks, Typewriters, Scales, etc.

MAURICE L. SHAINÉ
Assignee

BURNSTINE & GEIST
Attorneys for Assignee
35 NASSAU ST., NEW YORK

Paroquette's end, from *The Talking Machine World*, May 15, 1918

researchers have suggested that Victor Emerson produced Par-O-Ket records, but the sales list included a complete recording and pressing plant, proving that Paroquette recorded and manufactured its own records. One interesting note is the offering of "master and mother matrices" for sale. Could this material have been re-pressed on other

labels? There is no evidence of this, but it remains an intriguing possibility.

The Fad Passes

By the end of 1918, the "little record" fad was all but over. The small-diameter discs were plagued by technical problems. Inner grooves were prone to distortion and premature wear, volume levels tended to be low, and the light-weight discs often slipped on the turntable. Despite advertising claims, many of the smaller discs failed to achieve the full three-plus minute playing times of their 10" competitors. In 1918, Emerson and Operaphone switched to full-sized pressings. Domestic, Majestic, and Paroquette were out of business, and Little Wonder's sales began to slump. The demand for inexpensive records continued, but in the next decade it was to be met by cheaply produced, but full-sized, "dime-store" labels.

Allan Sutton is a free-lance writer based in Aurora, Colorado, and author of *A Guide to Pseudonyms on American Records (1892-1942)* and *Directory of American Disc Record Brands and Manufacturers (1891-1943)*, published by Greenwood Press.

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Do-It-Yourself Records

The International Record Company's Generic Labels

From collector Gene Scranton comes news of the International Record Co.'s little-known generic labels.

In addition to its own Excelsior and International Record Company labels, IRC produced nearly two dozen custom labels for department stores and mail order houses from 1905 through mid-1907 that rank among the most attractive designs of the period.

That was decidedly not the case with at least two IRC brands, however. The IRC-supplied Champion and Star brands used a generic label with pre-printed catalog number, title, description (with no artist

credits), and a simple circular border, but with the top half of the label left blank.

In that blank space, the brand names were crudely rubber-stamped, along with the telltale IRC notation, "For Any Disc Talking Machine." The do-it-yourself record company had only to invest in a stack of unbranded pressings and a rubber stamp to create its own brand.

Neither label, by the way, is related to its better-known namesake (Hawthorne & Sheble's Star, and the Starr Piano Co.'s Champion). —A.S.

A Red Seal by Any Other Name

by Allan Sutton

When the Opera Disc Company set out to challenge the Victor Red Seal, it chose a powerful weapon: Victor's own masters...

The early 1920s were boom years for Victor's prestigious Red Seal records. Victor advertised its classical records on a grand scale and spared no expense in retaining the biggest stars of the operatic world. Inevitably, success bred competition.

In 1921, the General Phonograph Corporation, makers of Okeh records, began to issue material by John McCormack and other performers then under Victor contract. Victor undoubtedly looked askance at the practice, but there was little the company could do. General Phonograph owned rights to the material—decade-old Fonotipia and Odeon masters—having licensed it from the Carl Lindstrom Company of Berlin, successor to the International Talking Machine Company.

The Opera Disc Company, Inc., however, presented quite a different challenge.

The Opera Disc Company and Polyphone Werke

In January 1921, Max Hesslein formed the Opera Disc Company in New York to market moderately priced records intended to compete with Victor's expensive Red Seals. Hesslein filed a trademark application on the Musica brand, with seated lyre-playing nude, on June 21, 1921 and claimed use of the trademark on records beginning March 25 of that year. For its material, Opera Disc turned to Polyphone Werke Aktien-Gesellschaft of Berlin.

To understand how Polyphone Werke, and thus Opera Disc, came to possess Victor material, we have to backtrack to the earliest days of World War I. At that time, Deutschen Grammophon Aktien-Gesellschaft (DGA) operated as the German affiliate of the Gramophone Company, which in turn was the British affiliate of the Victor Talking Machine Company. As a Gramophone

Company affiliate, DGA was entitled to use the "Master's Voice" trademark as well as material recorded by the Gramophone Company and Victor. Thus, DGA legally acquired a large stock of Victor stampers.

With the outbreak of European hostilities in 1914, Alexander Lucas took charge of DGA and seized Victor and Gramophone Company parts in DGA's possession as spoils of war. Having severed relations with the Gramophone Company and Victor, DGA was reorganized as the independent Deutsche Grammophon Gesellschaft (DGG). In March 1917, Lucas sold the Victor and Gramophone Company items to DGG's newly created Polyphone Werke subsidiary.



Opera Disc used material from European as well as American sources—in this case, a 1911 Gramophone Company master recorded in St. Petersburg, Russia.

Polyphone tried to enter the American market in the early 1920s as an import label, but had little success. However, it found a ready customer in Hesslein's Opera Disc Company. Polyphone agreed to supply Opera Disc with pressings from the Victor and Gramophone Company masters in its possession, which included material by Alda, Bori, Caruso, Chaliapin, Culp, Journet, Kreisler, Paderewski, Scotti, and other celebrities then under exclusive Victor contracts. A few DGG masters also appeared in the series.

Polyphone Werke's pressings were made from the original metal parts and, because Opera Disc did not use sunken labels, Victor's original recording data can often be seen inscribed under the label area. Most labels are multicolored, with their lyre-playing nude rendered in flesh-like tones. However, one rare variation is known, in gold on purple and pasted over the original German labels. Sales seem to have been poor, and many Opera Disc issues are far rarer than the corresponding original issues.

Victor quickly brought legal action against the Opera Disc venture, but the company continued to issue catalogs into 1922, their last year of opera-

tion. In that year, the matter was referred to the Anglo-German Mixed Arbitral Tribunal in London, which ordered that DGG and Polyphone Werke be restrained from exporting Victor- and Gramophone Company-derived pressings. However, the tribunal did allow continued sale of such material in Germany ("Hearing Held in the Victor Co.-Opera Disc Co. Suit," *Talking Machine World*, 3/15/1922). A final injunction took effect in May 1922, spelling the end of the Opera Disc operation.

John Fletcher's Symphony Concert Record

Opera Disc wasn't the only American company to use Red Seal material illegally. In 1922 the Fletcher Record Company introduced its Symphony Concert Record, which bore a suspicious resemblance to a pre-1914 German-produced export label of the same name.

Ten-inch Symphony Concert records drew on John Fletcher's Olympic masters and featured the usual popular and standard fare. But a 12" classical and operatic series drew on pre-World War I masters recorded by Victor and The Gramophone Company. Like Opera Disc's, these pressings were made from the original metal parts and show re-

recording data inscribed beneath the labels. The material almost certainly arrived by way of Polyphone Werke. If that is the case, the Symphony Concert series must have been very short-lived. The Fletcher Record Company was incorporated in April 1922, just a month before Polyphone Werke was restrained from exporting Victor-derived material to the United States.

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Comprising the Catalogs of Germany's Three Leading Phonograph Factories

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Sole United States Agents for Polyphone Werke Akt. Ges., Berlin

Polyphone's advertising made no mention of its link to the Opera Disc Company. (*Talking Machine World*, May 15, 1921)

Will Oakland

From THE ENCYCLOPEDIA OF POPULAR AMERICAN RECORDING PIONEERS: 1895-1925

By Tim Gracyk and Frank Hoffmann

NOTE: The encyclopedia is a work in progress. We ask for support and encouragement from V78J readers. Please send suggestions, corrections, additional information.

Will Oakland was among the most successful ballad singers of the acoustic era. He was, with the possible exception of Richard Jose, the most successful American countertenor to make recordings. Jose was of a slightly earlier generation, enjoying success on stage in the 1890s and as a recording artist during Victor's Monarch and Grand Prize era. In some ways Oakland followed in Jose's footsteps, recording many songs associated with Jose, but Oakland showed greater versatility, even recording a few ragtime songs. He recorded more often than Jose and for a longer period, with most recordings made from 1908 to 1916. His voice was higher than Jose's and countertenor Frank Coombs'.

He was born Herman Hinrichs in Jersey City, New Jersey, the youngest of six children. Jim Walsh reports in the November 1949 issue of Hobbies that Oakland's year of birth was 1880 but Oakland himself cites 1883 on a self-produced LP made late in life. His father, Bernhardt Hinrichs, had emigrated from Hamburg, Germany.

Oakland was inspired to make singing his profession after hearing John McCormack at the World's Fair in St. Louis in 1904. In that year he joined the George Primrose Minstrels (he had earlier sung with army bands when in the military) and remained with Primrose for three years. Jim Walsh reports in Hobbies that Primrose assigned to Herman Hinrichs the stage name Will Oakland, the "Oakland" being a tribute to Fred Oakland, a popular singer who had died by this time.

In 1908 the countertenor joined Lew Dockstader's Minstrels. Oakland in later years recounted how, while touring with Dockstader's, he "discovered" Al Jolson—he heard Jolson perform

in Little Rock, Arkansas and urged Dockstader to hire the young and unknown singer.

The June 1909 issue of Edison Phonograph Monthly, in announcing Oakland's recording of "Dear Old Dear" (Standard 10187), comments on the importance of high tenor voices in minstrel shows: "Critics may not agree concerning high tenor voices, but the general public have but one opinion. These voices are the striking ones in minstrelsy and they are equally popular among the Phonograph public." Oakland's was a rare countertenor voice. Without falsetto, he sang in the range of a contralto, producing enough volume to be heard throughout a theater. Most countertenors are baritones who employ falsetto.

He began recording in 1908 around the time the Edison Company introduced the four-minute cylinder, so some early Oakland recordings are two-minute Standard cylinders while others are four-minute Amberols. The June 1908 issue of Edison Phonograph Monthly announces Oakland's debut with Standard 9902: "This Record introduces a new Edison artist....Many of our Edison friends have expressed a desire to hear a good countertenor or falsetto singer, and Mr. Oakland can rest assured of a flattering reception." The song was "When The Autumn Moon Is Creeping Thro' The Woodlands" and it was issued in August. His next Edison cylinder was "Silver Threads Among the Gold," issued in October 1908 as four-minute wax Amberol Record 47. This was in the first issued group of Amberol recordings. It was later reissued as Blue Amberol 1547. He had recorded at the same session "When You and I Were Young, Maggie," and this was issued as two-minute Standard 9980 in November.

The August 1909 issue of Edison Phonograph Monthly, in announcing Oakland's recording of the sentimental "If I Only Had A Home Sweet Home" (Amberol 227), confirms that he was a new recording artist at this time: "Mr. Oakland has achieved remarkable fame, considering the short time he has been making Records." That Edison recordings of Oakland were regularly issued for the next few years is the best measure of his popularity in these years.

He toured widely. The October 1912 issue of the Edison Phonograph Monthly, announcing the release of Oakland singing "Dear Robin, I'll Be True" (Amberol 1580), states, "Mr. Oakland's great popularity among Phonograph owners is no doubt partially due to that [sic] fact that he tours the country frequently singing in the principal theatres of the large cities."

In contrast to countertenor Richard Jose making only solo recordings, Oakland blended his with the voices of others. The October 1909 issue of the Edison Phonograph Monthly, in announcing "In The Gloaming" (Amberol 320), shows for the first time Oakland "with chorus." Several Oakland Amberol recordings "with chorus" would follow.

Successful duet partners were Billy Murray as well as baritone William H. Thompson. One unusual Oakland-Murray performance is the comic love duet "Just For Tonight" (Victor 17622), with Oakland playing the role of a female who pleads with her "honey" to stay with her "just for tonight."

For several U.S. Everlasting cylinders and one Edison, Oakland recorded with Thompson. An example of an Oakland-Thompson duet is "My Wild Irish Rose," issued as four-minute wax Amberol Record 567 in October 1910. Oakland often sang Irish ballads.

Oakland joined Henry Burr and Albert Campbell for a tenor trio that Columbia called the Lyric Trio. Victor called it the Oakland-Campbell-Burr Trio.

A Victor recording made on July 12, 1910 features the five singers later called the Heidelberg Quintet. Victor did not use that name until 1912. "In The Gloaming" (16646) features Oakland with

the American Quartet providing chorus support.

The March 1911 issue of Edison Phonograph Monthly announced the release of "On Mobile Bay" (Standard 10495) as sung by the Oakland Quartet—"a new combination of voices." Only Oakland's is identified as one of the four voices. Other voices are "1st tenor, 1st and 2nd bass." Brian Rust's Complete Entertainment Discography identifies these as John Bieling, Steve Porter, and William F. Hooley. In July 1911, the E.P.M. announced the release of "Stick To Your Mother, Tom" (Amberol 783), identifying chorus members as John Bieling, Billy Murray, Steve Porter, and William Hooley. The July 1912 issue of E.P.M. identified the same singers as the chorus for Oakland's "I'll Take You Home Again, Kathleen" (Amberol 1102). The first time the Edison Company used the name the Heidelberg Quintet—the five singers having equal importance—was in announcing "Under The Love Tree" (Amberol 1131) in the August 1912 issue of E.P.M. The quintet's first Blue Amberol was issued in October, 1912: "Way Down South" (B.A. 1531). Heidelberg Quintet numbers were more upbeat than Oakland's usual fare.

Some of Oakland's Columbia recordings were available in England on the Regal label.

Oakland is on six Edison Diamond Discs. His final Edison recording, "That Tumble-Down



Shack in Athlone," was issued as Diamond Disc 50586 and the dubbed Blue Amberol 3876.

He recorded two Irish songs for Okeh in 1919 and another in 1920. Six years passed before he made his final recording during the 78 RPM era, "Let's Grow Old Together" and "Gone," issued on the Harmony label as 162-H in 1926. Harmony at that time used the old acoustic method of recording. No Oakland 78s were made with the electric recording process. "Let's Grow Old Together" was Oakland's theme song and the Harmony disc shows it was composed by Oakland, Brockman, and Schuster. It should not be confused with Merrill and Dinsmore's 1908 "We're Growing Old Together," recorded by Oakland in 1911 and issued as Columbia A1017, nor should it be confused with another song of the same title written in 1926 by Ed G. Nelson.

He was popular as a radio artist in the mid-'20s. He also performed as a night club singer and went on singing tours. When Jim Walsh wrote about him for the November 1949 Hobbies, Oakland was on an extended tour performing for disabled service men at Veterans camp shows.



Oakland discusses his career on this 1954 LP.

In 1954, Oakland celebrated his 50th anniversary in show business by making a 12" LP titled Will Oakland Golden Anniversary 1904 - 1954. Presumably copies were for distribution to friends since the label states "This record is not for sale." The LP reissued recordings from earlier decades but also featured Will Oakland narrating his memories of earlier days as well as two performances sung by Oakland late in life: "The Sunshine of Your Smile," from a radio show, and "Danny Boy," from a 1950s television show hosted by George Jessel. Oakland states on the LP, "Little did I think when I was making these records that they would live to touch the heart strings of my listeners of today. I started making records in 1904. This being 1954, I'm calling it my jubilee year of recording, also of my career in the theatre."

The LP is fascinating for details shared by Oakland about early days in the industry. He reports that one of his biggest thrills was playing the Palladium in London in 1927.

Curiously, Oakland on the LP states he recorded "Silver Threads Among the Gold" for the Edison Company as early as 1904, with Thomas Edison personally inviting Oakland to record this upon hearing Oakland sing it one evening during a Primrose concert. Edison attended few concerts due to his deafness, so this is unlikely. The Edison Phonograph Monthly announces Oakland as an Edison artist for the first time in June of 1908, and his version of "Silver Threads Among the Gold" was an Amberol recording issued in October 1908, as announced in the September issued of the Edison trade publication.

Regarding the end of his recording career, Oakland states on the LP, "In 1922 I was playing in The Spice of 1922 at the Winter Garden, New York. The show went on the road but I stayed in New York because I had had enough road work by that time. It was around that time when radio was coming into prominence. I went for radio immediately...The phonograph companies informed me if I continued on radio, I would make no more records. Well, I figured I made my share, from 1904 to 1922, so I stayed on radio. That's why

Will Oakland records haven't been heard...or even sold in latter years."

In fact, Oakland's heyday as a recording artist was from 1908 to 1916. A mere handful of recordings made in 1918 and 1919 were issued by Edison, Emerson, and Okeh. It is unlikely that radio work interfered with recording opportunities since companies had already stopped issuing Oakland recordings by 1920, with the single exception of an Okeh disc. It is more likely that companies stopped recording Oakland because tastes in popular music changed during and after the World War I period.

According to his obituary published on May 16, 1956 in the New York Times, Oakland operated various New York City night clubs in the '20s and '30s. He filed for bankruptcy in Brooklyn Federal Court on August 4, 1934. He then worked

"as resident manager and entertainer of the Valley Stream (L.I.) Catering Company."

Oakland spent his retirement years in Glen Ridge, New Jersey. His New York Times obituary stated he "lived on a pension and a veteran's allowance in a rooming house." He made occasional appearances--performing at the Palace Theater in New York City for a week in 1951, performing on the George Jessel and Ed Sullivan shows. He died on May 15, 1956. The July 1956 issue of Hobbies states that he died "of a heart attack on a Bloomfield, N.J., bus enroute to Newark." His obituary does not state if Oakland ever married. No surviving family members are mentioned. The New York Times obituary states, "On his body was a note directing that in the event of his death Mr. [Ed] Sullivan and several New York newspaper columnists should be notified."

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VARIETY

AMERICA'S FAVORITE CONTRA TENOR WILL OAKLAND

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ORPHEUM
THEATRE
Week Feb. 23

Mr. Oakland extends many thanks to Mr. Edward Darling for permitting him to appear in concert in Brooklyn while playing the Orpheum

BUSHWICK
THEATRE
Week March 1st

This appeared in the February 20, 1920 issue of Variety. Thanks to Quentin Riggs, Richard Arsenty and Dick Carty for providing important information about Oakland.

Editor's Comments

Now is the time to help keep V78J going. All subscribers have paid for this issue (#9), and I ask readers to mail \$20 for the coming series: issues #10, #11, #12 and #13. Each will have inserts of duplicated pages from The Talking Machine World.

Please make checks to "Tim Gracyk." I hope you mail a check sooner rather than later since hearing from readers is good for morale and prompt renewals will help determine how many copies of the coming 10th issue are printed.

Background Information on V78J

Advisors and regular contributors receive V78J for free, which I mention so the "wrong" people do not send checks now that renewal time is here! I cannot take money from a couple of dozen people who help make V78J possible—those who spend hours writing articles, who write letters in reply to my questions, who phone long-distance to tell me about new developments in the field.

To acknowledge their help with recent issues, I give special thanks here to R.J. Wakeman, Quentin Riggs, Ron Dethlefsen, Bill Knorp, David Rocco, Ron Pendergraft, Dick Carty, Allen Koenigsberg, Larry Jeannette,, Bill Shaman, Tom Rhodes, and William R. Moran. V78J would be hard to produce without their suggestions and corrections.

Other valued advisors are V78J's regular contributors, which include Brian Rust, Jas Obrecht, Allan Sutton, David Banks, Charles Arnhold, and Ron Pendergraft. Each has submitted articles for coming issues. My sincere thanks! Contributors for the coming 10th issue also include Bob Baumbach, Cristóbal Díaz and Bruce Vermazen. The next issue will be good!

Perhaps by the 11th issue a few remaining mysteries about Victor's pressing plant and studio in Oakland, California will be resolved, at which point V78J will publish Bill Nicolson's research about that site. The building looks today as it does in a photograph in the October 1924 issue of The Talking Machine World. Nicolson will also dis-

cuss Columbia's Oakland plant, which opened around September 1926 at 57th Ave. off East 14th St. I mention Nicolson's exciting project in case V78J readers have special information to share about these Oakland plants.

Scott Joplin

I took the new Scott Joplin biography by Ed Berlin on a trip to St. Louis and there wrote a book review, which will be in the next V78J. Joplin called St. Louis home for a few years, and V78J readers should know about the Scott Joplin House State Historic Site, located at 2658A Delmar Blvd. It is open daily. When Joplin lived at this site for a year or so beginning in the spring or summer of 1901 (by February 1903 he had moved to 2117 Lucas), this street was called Morgan. Decades ago the building had been virtually destroyed by vandalism and fire, as was most of the neighborhood, but the building has been lovingly restored because of the Joplin connection.

Progress on the Rosebud Cafe is impressive. Tom Turpin ran his famous Rosebud Bar at 2220-2222 Market during ragtime's heyday, and though that building is long gone, as are most others of the St. Louis that Joplin knew, Turpin's Rosebud is being reconstructed next to the Joplin home. It will be multi-functional, perfect for ragtime concerts. Stop for a visit if you are in St. Louis.

More on Eddie Gray

In his article in the last V78J on Eddie Gray's 1916 song "When I Hear That 'Jaz' Band Play," Mike Montgomery asked whether Gray was a black or white composer. Allan Sutton was first to point out that Gray would, within five years of composing the earliest copyrighted "jass" song, make Black Swan recordings, which indicated that Gray was black. William Shaman sent a tape of Gray—a tenor—singing "I Like You (Because You Have Such Loving Ways)" and "Why Did You Make A Plaything of Me?" (Black Swan 2011).

When Montgomery learned about Gray's connection with Black Swan, he hunted in his files and pulled out a four-page February 1922 listing of Black Swan discs. Gray's face is on the catalog's cover! The catalog states, "Eddie was a big feature last season with Handy's Orchestra on its Southern tour." Anything known of Gray after 1922?

More on Jass and Early Blues

In pre-1920 issues of The Talking Machine World I have found nearly 200 pages with items about early jazz or "jass." There are articles on the

THE LAMPOGRAPH



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The latest invention in the phonograph. The man who has bought a wooden machine will not buy another one, but will buy a Lampograph. Applications from first-class dealers considered, correspondence invited from manufacturer and business man of constructive ability.

F. H. FERAUD

1911 State Street, Granite City, Ill.

From the February 1919 issue of The Talking Machine World. The trade journal provides detailed information about some very obscure manufacturers, and coming issues of V78J will have articles on small companies as well as big ones. On the next page is the Pathé home recorder, from the December 1923 issue.

ODJB and Louisiana Five, announcements of new jazz discs, cartoons satirizing "jass." I am binding duplicated pages for fellow enthusiasts. Knowing my interest in the topic, Ed Sprankle sent a note that might be called a coda to Mike Montgomery's "In Pursuit of the First 'Jazz' Song" in the last V78J.

Sprankle reports that QRS piano roll 33221 is titled "Cocoanut Grove Jazz." It is a fox trot by the multi-talented J. Tim Brymn (whose Okeh recordings should be reissued on CD). The QRS Company issued the roll in mid-to-late 1917. Interestingly, the roll and box labels give the now-standard "jazz" spelling while the song's listing in the 1918 QRS catalog, which is complete up to July 1, 1918, uses the "jass" spelling. The spelling clearly had not been standardized by 1918.

Sprankle asked Matthew Caulfield to check at the Copyright Office for information about this tune. "Cocoanut Grove Jazz" is listed as a fox trot written by Brymn, arranged by William Schulz and published on June 23, 1917 by Leo Feist. Caulfield also found these titles in the copyright files: "The Jazz Fox Trot" (from the show Hawaiian Butterfly), written by Billy Baskette and Joseph Santly (April 20, 1917); "The Jazz One-Step" (from the show Hong Kong), written by Hans M. Holstein and Alma M. Sanders (April 20, 1917); "The Jazz Dance (The Little Jazz Dance Ev'rybody's Crazy 'Bout)" by W. Benton Overstreet (May 14, 1917).

I am compiling a list of jazz-related songs published in the 1916-1919 period. This helps.

Corrections To The Last Issue

Martin Bryan kindly called attention to a reference to eight-inch Paramount discs in a recent V78J article on Collins and Harlan, asking if Paramount really issued discs of this diameter in its early years. I was thinking of eight-inch Operaphones. The smallest Paramounts are slightly over nine inches. The Collins and Harlan article is being revised for the coming Encyclopedia of Popular American Recording Pioneers (co-written by Frank Hoffmann and me). I am grateful that Bryan caught this before it was printed in a book!



William R. Moran spotted my error in citing Victor 88481 for Alma Gluck's "Carry Me Back To Old Virginny." I suspect that Moran, in his decades of collecting, has seen many copies of the Gluck disc—which is Victor 74420—and has also seen plenty of John McCormack's "Ave Maria," which is 88481.

Ragtime Discography Available

In the last issue I mentioned books available from Laurie Wright in England. The volumes that I ordered arrived promptly and I feel one in particular should be better known. If Rainer E. Lotz's German Ragtime & Prehistory of Jazz is obscure, its title may have scared away potential readers. This is not about German ragtime. It is a ragtime discography compiled by someone who happens to be German.

Its 371 pages list recordings of classic rags, ragtime songs, compositions that refer to ragtime, "coon" songs, minstrel material, black-face comedy. Here are selective discographies of not only European artists but also Collins and Harlan, Billy Murray, Bob Roberts, Ada Jones, other American pioneers. I admit there are omissions (why no Jim Europe recordings, not even "Down Home Rag"?) and some information is incomplete (the artist for Edison cylinder 7186 is given only as "— Denny," Will F. Denny being the singer in question) but the book is becoming for me a valued research tool. Price is 15 pounds. See "Editor's Comments" of the last V78J for how to order from Wright.

On Soundbox Restoration

Responding to David Spanovich's article in the last V78J, Tom Hawthorn adds thoughts about overhauling No. 2 soundboxes: "I agree that the use of new beeswax or candlewax to reseal the needle bar through the hole in the diaphragm usually gives better results than trying to reuse the old existing wax. It can be applied with a match as described by Spanovich though I use a very low wattage soldering iron. It will remain pliable so it can be removed easily. Regarding Spanovich's use of silicone sealant to make the reproducer airtight, I worry about the phonograph collector 50 years from now who tries to disassemble the reproducer for another restoration job. We must always keep in mind that in 50, 75, or 100 years, some future collector will be working on the same items we so lovingly restored in the 1990s." Hawthorn wonders if Spanovich over-emphasizes white gaskets: "Red gaskets are readily available of the proper size, and the use of them as opposed to the white tubing results in a better looking restoration."

Columbia Book Is Out!

Robert Baumbach has just published his Columbia Phonograph Companion. It does full justice to Columbia disc machines, and anyone who admires Columbia machines will want this. V78J's next issue will review it. In hard-cover only, it is available postpaid for \$29.95 from Allen Koenigsberg, 502 E. 17th St., Brooklyn NY 11226 (phone 718-941-6835). Mention V78J and 100 steel needles are included with orders!

Gene Austin Discography

Tor Magnusson, editor of Skivsamlaren (a Swedish journal for record collectors), published in 1983 an 82 page booklet titled The Gene Austin Recordings. It may interest some who collect discs of the Orthophonic era, Austin's peak years. Featuring illustrations and written in English, it is an exhaustive discography, beginning with Austin's 1924 Vocalion work and ending with LPs made late in life. It also lists films, radio and television

work. Write to Tor Magnusson at PO Box 25065, S-40031 Goteborg, Sweden. A postpaid copy is \$12 (for surface delivery—\$14 for air) if U.S. currency is sent. Don't sent a personal check since cashing it involves a bank fee at his end.

More on Zon-O-Phone

In the last V78J David Rocco discussed two surprisingly thick Zon-O-Phone discs. George Paul has sent more information about Zon-O-Phone's early years. He has studied the talking machine industry for some time, as Antique Phonograph Monthly readers may know. He writes, "I have found two Berliner records which are twice the thickness of 'normal' Berliner pressings, but even at over 1/8 inch, these are not on a par with Diamond Discs. Zonophone discs of this period were pressed by the George Burt Company of Milburn, New Jersey. There is evidence to suggest that some Berliner stampers found their way to Milburn and were used in the manufacture of 'pirate' records. The 'shield' Zonophone label was used after the April 6, 1900 alliance of Frank Seaman and Columbia. Rocco's thick Zonophones almost certainly date from April 1900. The two thick Berliners were recorded during the same time: 4/9/00 and 4/12/00. The unusual thickness of these discs raises the possibility of all four being pressed by Milburn, but that is purely speculative."

The last V78J suggested Louis P. Valiquet may have worked with discs, but Paul states that



Valiquet, designer of the Zonophone machine, was not involved with the record end of the business. This was the domain of John C. English. Paul writes, "English had learned the recording art with the North American Phonograph Co., the Columbia Phonograph Co., the Universal Talking Machine Co. from the spring of 1898, and then the George Burt Co. in March 1901. In January 1902, English went to work for Victor."

George Paul and Tim Fabrizio are co-authoring a history of the talking machine from 1877 to 1929. I have read enough articles by Fabrizio (in Ernie Bayly's Talking Machine Review) as well as by Paul to conclude that this history, when published next year, may turn out to be the definitive text the field badly needs!

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From Leslie's Weekly (Oct. 20, 1900). Note the warning about buying and selling machines named Gram-o-phone. Eldridge R. Johnson soon changed his label, removing the phrase "improved Gram-o-phone record" (he also removed "Consolidated Talking Machine Company" from the label).

FAVES AND RAVES FROM THE FOREIGN LISTS

By Dick Spottswood

It's time for a list that highlights treasures from the vast catalogs of foreign-language materials which were in production by the turn of the century.

I'm fond of fiddling (and fiddling around) but even so it comes as a surprise to me that half my choices feature the instrument. One reason is that it's probably found in more places on the globe than any other instrument—I could have selected pieces from Africa, Mexico, Albania or the Yaqui Indian tradition which compare favorably with these choices.

I've selected tracks picked by me and others for inclusion on CD archival reissues. This means that everything below is currently available. If your musical horizons could stand broadening, or if you're merely curious, you may find some things worth checking out.

FIDDLERS:

1) PAWLO HUMENIUK: "Tanec pid werbamy" (Dance under the willows). Columbia 27078-F, Arhoolie/Folklyric CD 7025, 1926.

Humeniuk (1884-1965) dominated the Ukrainian lists in the 1926-36 decade. Though a classically trained violinist, he applied his virtuoso technique to folk dance tunes. This medley of Ukrainian kozachoks and kolomyjkas swoops, swirls and changes keys, showing off a great fiddler at his brilliant best.

2) PROFESSOR YAU HOK CHAU AND ASSOCIATES: "Yu ta pa chiao" (Rain dropping on the banana tree). Victor 56131, Rounder CD 1125, 1930.

Yau Hok Chau (1880-1942) was a famed Cantonese composer and er hu (2-stringed violin) player, who was touring America when he made his only known recordings. His ensemble also features yang qin (hammered dulcimer), qin qin (banjo) and lute. It's the title cut of a collection of Chinese classical music.

3) PACKIE DOLAN AND HIS MELODY BOYS: "Lasses of Donnybrook-Highland Fling." Victor 21484, Viva Vocé 006, 1928.

James Patrick Dolan (1904-1932) comes third in the hierarchy of County Sligo fiddlers who emigrated to New York (James Morrison and Michael Coleman precede him), but the piano-less records he made with a fiddle-penny whistle-bones ensemble are as good as old-time Irish music gets. The CD comes from Dublin and contains all but one of Dolan's surviving recordings.

4) FR. DUKLI WIEJSKA BANDA (Frank Dukla's Village Band): "Na boisku [In the barn]-Polka." Victor 79445, Arhoolie/Folklyric CD 7031, 1927.

Dukla's 1926-7 Chicago Victors opened the gates to a flood of recordings by traditional dance ensembles made up of emigrés from south-eastern Poland. His band featured a well-recorded, adventurous bowed bass which helped to call attention to the low-end sonorities of the new Orthophonic Victrolas. This energetic three-part polka is Dukla at his wild and crazy best.

5) ABREW'S PORTUGUESE INSTRUMENTAL TRIO: "Tango portuguez." Columbia 1129-X, Heritage CD 05, 1931.

Fiddler Augusto Abreu was born around 1890, probably in New England, where many Cape Verdeans migrated during the last century. Abreu's fiery, intense style suggests he had to have been one of the best.

SINGERS:

6) NARAYANRAO VYAS: "Nis bharan kaise jaun." HMV P.13366, Rounder CD 1083, late 1920s.

This Hindustani performance from India features singing like you've never heard before. Vyas uses non-verbal vocal techniques known elsewhere as scat or lilting to project a few lines from a love song into a raging, surging tour de force.

7) MÜNİR NURETTİN SELÇUK: *Durak "Bülbül-i shûrîdeyim gülden nasîbim var benim"* (A disturbed nightingale am I, sharing the rose). Victor 1350, Rounder CD 1051, 1927.

Münir Nurettin (1899-1980) was Turkey's most highly regarded singer; this *durak*, or Sufi hymn, shows why. He sings only with a cello; with his sublime chops, it is all that Münir needs. The Victor reissue from HMV appeared with a Red Seal label, correctly suggesting his exalted status. Why didn't Victor do that with Jelly Roll Morton and Tommy Johnson too?

8) ANDONIS DALGAS (Dhiamantidhis): *"Sousta politiki."* Orthophonic S-607, RCA Victor 38-3012, Rounder CD 1079, Arhoolie/Folklyric CD 7005, 1930.

Dalgas (1892-1945) was Greece's answer to Münir Nurettin and one of the world's most accomplished singers, with vocal resources few western singers would dream of. He grew up in Turkey and performed convincingly in the rebetic style that was also popular in Greece. It'd be stretching things to call this a blues, but if you hear it you'll see why I'd like to.

9) JULIAN WHITEROSE: *"Iron Duke in the Land."* Victor 67362, Rounder CD 1039, 1914.

Victor sailed to Port-of-Spain, Trinidad to record this pioneering calypso classic. "Whiterose"

was one of Henry Julian's calypso sobriquets; Iron Duke was another. Victor manipulated his identity still further, labeling him simply "J. Resigna." He had served several functions in the White Rose Social Union's annual Carnival displays for twenty years, and boasted about his appointments in this delightful *lavway* (marching song). Many listeners will find this choice to be kind of old and creaky but I'm sure the patina of age won't faze *V78* readers. And it is startling to find African-American music of consequence on record as early as this.

10) SEXTETO OCCIDENTE: *"Miguel, los hombres no lloran"* (Miguel, men don't cry). Columbia 2584-X, Arhoolie/Folklyric CD 7006, 1926.

One of my favorites among records made in the great Cuban *sexteto* format which was first recorded in 1918 and matured in Havana in the 1920s. María Teresa Vera (1895-1965) led this group with her strong voice and guitar, joined by other fine singers and string players, and balanced by aggressive *bongó*, *claves* and *maracas* players.

Dick Spottswood lives and works in Silver Spring, Maryland (email: "rspottsw@capaccess.org"). His *Ethnic Music On Records* was published in seven volumes by the University of Illinois Press in 1990. He's keeping it up to date with additions/corrections and remains grateful for any help.



Wish to learn more about discs featuring the Royal Serbian Orchestra? Look under Stevan Zerbec (its leader--shown here playing fiddle?) in Spottwood's seven-volume *Ethnic Music On Records*.

MY TEN FAVORITE JAZZ 78s

By Colin J. Bray

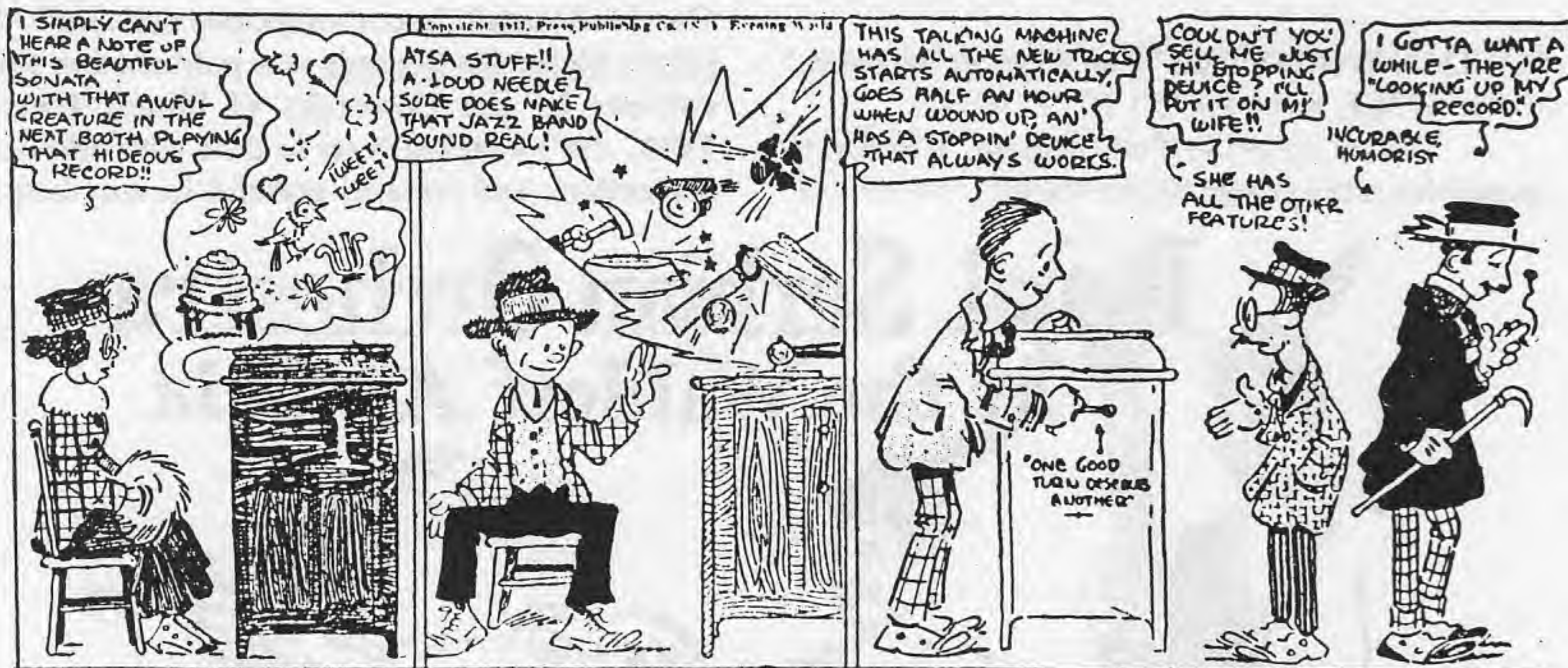
My favorite jazz 78s probably run into four digits! These ten, listed in no particular order, would be in the top thirty or so at any time.

1) **Piron's New Orleans Orchestra: "Bouncing Around" (Okeh 40021, 1923).** Of all bands from New Orleans, I particularly love Piron's Orchestra. Virtually everything recorded was written by a band member. If I close my eyes while their discs are playing, I can imagine myself at Tranchina's Restaurant on the banks of Lake Ponchatrain where the band was resident in the early '20s. Piron discs include the only recordings by the influential clarinetist Lorenzo Tio Jr.

2) **King Oliver's Jazz Band: "Tears" (Okeh 40000, 1923).** Oliver's Creole Band was the greatest jazz band ever and I could have chosen any of their records. Here is Louis' first solo on record, which has to be the most important moment in recorded musical history.

3) **Luis Russell's Orchestra: "Panama" (Okeh 8849, 1930).** All of Russell's Okeh recordings are superb. Pops Foster is my all-time favorite jazz musician. He said in his autobiography that playing in this band wasn't like work. The whole band loved each other's playing, and you can tell in their music! Just as you think the tune is coming to an end, Albert Nicholas takes a wonderful solo before the band returns with incredible force for the last chorus. Pops drives this band along. What a player! This record goes with me in my coffin.

4) **Johnny Dodds' Black Bottom Stompers: "Come On and Stomp, Stomp, Stomp" (Brunswick 3568, 1927).** As someone commented to me, Johnny Dodds was not on a bad record, and that's a compliment to his playing. Dodds played with much emotion. This is the best example I can think of exhibiting his hot, biting tone and the way he could bend notes.



After this cartoon appeared in newspapers, it was reprinted in the December 1917 issue of The Talking Machine World. The woman sampling a classical record complains about the teen in the next listening booth with a jazz disc. She says, "I simply can't hear a note of this beautiful sonata with that awful creature in the next booth playing that hideous record!!" He says, "Atsa stuff!! A loud needle sure does make that jazz band sound real!"



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5) **Original Dixieland Jazz Band: "Alice Blue Gown" (Columbia [British] 824, 1920).** I can live without ODJB records made in the U.S. I feel their recordings made in London on their extended visit there in 1919-20 are better examples of jazz. Readers may be surprised that I choose this record, as it is a waltz! But it is still jazz. Larry Shields is magnificent on clarinet. I'm sure this is how the band really sounded in New Orleans.

6) **King Oliver's Dixie Syncopators: "Wa Wa Wa" (Vocalion 1033, 1926).** Joe Oliver formed this band after his Creole band broke up in 1924. Bands were getting bigger and Oliver was right at the forefront of things. Kid Ory takes a wonderful solo on trombone. The band also includes my second favorite clarinetist, Albert Nicholas.

7) **Clara Smith: "Kitchen Mechanic Blues" (Columbia 14097-D, 1925).** I had to slip in at least one female blues record. I love Bessie Smith discs but finally chose her biggest rival at Columbia. Clara just belts out the words on this tour de force. I haven't heard clarinetist Bob Fuller play better, either. A very emotional record.

8) **New Orleans Owls: "Stomp Off, Let's Go" (Columbia 489-D, 1925).** This was the New Orleans Owls' first recording. They swing like hell. Fantastic ensemble playing.

9) **Halfway House Orchestra: "Tell Me Who" (Columbia 1542-D, 1928).** I could have included any of another three or four records by this wonderful band, in particular "Let Me Call You Sweetheart" from 1925. As a string bass player, I chose this because of Chink Martin's lesson as to how to play the instrument—wonderful thick tone when he bows the bass. It is remarkable how he lifts the band when he slaps the bass through the final chorus. Fantastic!

10) **Spike Hughes and his Decca-Dents: "It's Unanimous Now" (Decca [British] F-1690, 1930).** Spike Hughes was one of the few guys in Britain trying to play jazz in the early years. This is his band's first record and I include it because of the presence of trumpeter Sylvester Ahola, whose playing is immensely under-rated, especially in his home country of America. He takes a peach of a solo here.

Colin J. Bray lives in Toronto. He is co-owner and co-producer (along with John Wilby and John R.T. Davies) of Jazz Oracle Records. He plays string bass in the Hot Five Jazzmakers, a six piece band out of Toronto. He has also produced and hosted, for the past six years, the radio show Sugarfoot Stomp on CIUT, 89.5 FM in Toronto.



MY TEN FAVORITE HAWAIIAN 78s

By T. Malcolm Rockwell

1) **Bessie Keaunui: "The Rosary"** (Gennett 4999). A haunting, primitive Hawaiian guitar solo done rubato. Stark in its beauty.

2) **Tenor Solo With Chorus: "Aloha Oe"** (Silverstone 39462). Possibly the most beautiful rendition of the most recorded Hawaiian tune. It sends shivers up my spine every time I hear it.

3) **Kio Valencia's Guitar Band: "On The Beach At Waikiki"** (Piccadilly 115). A rousing version on a British label of this old chestnut, done only the way a band that has virtually no firsthand knowledge of Hawaiian music can do it!

4 & 5) **Jenks "Tex" Carman: "Hillbilly Hula"/"New Waikiki Beach"** (Decca 28771). With just a steel guitar and an upright string bass, this basic Country & Western artist gives a unique interpretation of Hawaiian music.

6) **Salon-Orchester mit Xylophon, Hawaiian-Guitare und Vogelstimmen: "Im Wald die Voglein singen"** (Elite Record 1417). Local boy meets the Von Trapp family...in the forest...complete with bird calls. Wonderful!

7) **Jerry Byrd: "Hilo March"** (Mercury 6267). A great rendition by a steel guitar master at his best. Recorded around 1950 from a tune originally titled "Ke 'Ala Tuberoze," written by Joseph Kapaeau Ae'a in the summer of 1881. That same year German-born bandmaster Henry Berger re-arranged it, naming it "Hilo March" for the Royal Hawaiian Band. It has become a standard.

8) **Frankie Wallace: "Everybody Does It In Hawaii"** (Oriole 1873). An obscure work-up of a tune Jimmie Rodgers made popular. It is not truly Hawaiian but the steel playing and the awkward phrasing make it feel authentic.

9) **Bennie Nawahi (as the Q.R.S. Boys): "I've Seen My Baby (And It Won't Be Long Now)"** (QRS R-7062). What can be said about Bennie's slide guitar playing? He's dirty, he misses notes, he's got great mana, and it reaches right off the record and grabs you. Excellent!

10) **Sol Hoopii's Novelty Quartet: "I Like You"** (Brunswick 6787). Possibly the finest Hawaiian guitarist ever, Sol Hoopii never misses. This piece shows his versatility in the melding of jazz and Hawaiian styles.

T. Malcolm Rockwell lives in Kula, Hawaii. He is working on a comprehensive discography of Hawaiian recordings. These are his ten favorite Hawaiian 78s this week-listed in no particular order. Anyone with special information on Hawaiian recordings should contact him at P.O. Box 1064, Kula HI 96790-1064.



T. Malcolm's Father, Tommy Rockwell

Thomas Malcolm Rockwell is the son of Tommy Rockwell (1901-1958), the Okeh executive who worked closely with Bix Beiderbecke and Louis Armstrong, among other jazz giants, and discovered Mississippi John Hurt, among other blues artists. Bits of information about Rockwell as Okeh director and as a manager of artists have been published in biographies of various musicians. T. Malcolm hopes to put everything known in a definitive article. He welcomes information--facts, stories, even rumors--that collectors can share.

V78J's editor found in the October 1924 issue of Talking Machine World the earliest known printed reference to Rockwell. A congratulatory paragraph reports that Tom G. Rockwell was married in Sacramento, California. The "G." is for Gilbert. TMW identifies Rockwell as a "Cheney phonograph and Vocalion record dealer" employed by the Munson-Raynor Corporation of Los Angeles. He is called a "Benedict," an allusion to the Shakespeare character who early in Much Ado About Nothing declares himself content to be a bachelor but later resolves to marry (TMW called any newly married man a "Benedict"). T. Malcolm was the son of a later marriage.

In December 1924, Brunswick bought the Aeolian Company's Vocalion disc division. Did this affect Rockwell as a Vocalion dealer? Months later he was working for Columbia. TMW notes in November 1925, "T.G. Rockwell, for four years manager of the San Francisco branch of the Munson-Raynor Corp., jobbers of Cheney phonographs and Vocalion records on the Pacific Coast, recently accepted the position of manager of the record department of the Chicago branch of the Columbia Phonograph Co., Inc. A few months prior to his transfer to the Chicago office, Mr. Rockwell was located in the Columbia branch at San Francisco...He assumed his new duties on October 10, succeeding Jack Kapp."

Columbia acquired Okeh in October 1926. Rockwell succeeded Myknee Jones as Okeh's recording director and presided over the famous Frank Trumbauer-Bix Beiderbecke session of February 4, 1927, which produced "Singin' The

Blues." On September 9, 1927, Rockwell approved for release Bix's "In A Mist." Needing a title for this piano improvisation, he asked Trumbauer to supply one on the spot, according to Trumbauer's own account in Philip R. Evans and Larry F. Kiner's Tram: The Frank Trumbauer Story.

Rockwell's work with Louis Armstrong, beginning with the supervision of Hot Seven sessions in May 1927, is discussed in James Lincoln Collier's Louis Armstrong: An American Genius (New York: Oxford University Press, 1983). Rockwell soon served as Armstrong's manager, with Joe Glaser succeeding Rockwell.

Rockwell later was president of General Amusement Corporation and worked closely with the Mills Brothers, among others. The FBI kept files on Rockwell because of his work with, and advocacy for, black artists. T. Malcolm has asked the FBI to make the files public. We hope enough information is in these files, in other issues of The Talking Machine World, and in other sources for a solid account of Rockwell's life to be written.



T. Malcolm Rockwell's Hawaiian discography will be a welcome addition to the field. An appendix to George S. Kanahele's Hawaiian Music And Musicians (Honolulu: University Press of Hawaii, 1979) features a helpful selected discography.

TEN COMMON 78s I WOULDN'T TRADE OR SELL

By Charles Arnhold

The second issue of V78J featured a list entitled "Ten Indispensable Records," submitted by William R. Moran. It is a terrific list, and I was happy to find on it six records that I also own. I got to thinking about the many records I consider "indispensable" to my own well-being and was surprised how many are common titles. Collectors don't have to spend much money to enjoy these truly great performances, and collectors who shop around need not settle for worn copies.

I list ten Victor records which make death and taxes seem more remote and unimportant. Each meets a simple criterion: I know at least two other small-time collectors like myself who have managed to find copies in fine condition.

1) **Emilio de Gogorza: "Clavelitos"** (Victor 64798). I had looked for this for years, envious of friends who had already found it, and recently found a near-mint copy! This song is usually sung by a woman, but I feel de Gogorza does it best. There also exist fine recordings by Conchita Supervia, Antonina Neshdanova (electric, in Spanish, made in 1939!), and Galli-Curci, which is perhaps the most common version (and plays around 73 r.p.m.). Play de Gogorza at 76.6 r.p.m.

2) **Enrico Caruso: "Un di all'azzurro spazio" from Andrea Chenier** (Victor 88060; 1907). Recorded the same day as the famous "Vesti la giubba" from I Pagliacci, this is at least as fine. Caruso picks up more meaning in the words and finds more colors and shades than Gigli did in his very fine recordings of the aria. Caruso's is the definitive performance and shows how verismo opera should have been, and rarely was, sung. 76.6 r.p.m.

3) **Alma Gluck: "Rossignols amoureux" from Hippolyte Et Aricie** (Victor 74249; 1911). This famous record turns up less frequently than it used to, but I see occasional copies in good condition. Many think it is Gluck's greatest record—they could be right. 76.6 r.p.m.

4) **Geraldine Farrar: "Séguidille" from Carmen** (Victor 88511; 1914). Farrar, even more than Mary Garden, qualifies as the most perpetually under-rated singer on acoustic recordings. It is a scandal that no new Farrar biography has appeared during a time when so much material is being published on more obscure singers.

She has also been insufficiently represented on CD. Years ago, Court Opera Classics (of Austria) and Rubini (of England) as well as Club 99 in this country issued interesting dubs on LP, but a "Complete Recordings of Geraldine Farrar" CD set has not appeared. It is long overdue. I would rather see it than more releases of Ponselle, Muzio or Zenatello.

It is time to re-evaluate Farrar and grant the soprano her rightful position as one of the great singers as well as a most imaginative interpreter. This Carmen excerpt is a case in point. Farrar interprets with great insight and charm yet never overplays her hand. There is a "rightness" to this performance that in no way affects its spontaneity. It plays at 76.6 r.p.m.

5) **Geraldine Farrar: "My Old Kentucky Home"** (Victor 88238; 1910). As different from the Carmen excerpt as can be—and as well sung. If you are too politically-correct to tolerate its words, play instead Farrar's "Annie Laurie" (Victor 88052), which is equally fine. "My Old Kentucky Home" plays at 76.6, "Annie Laurie" at 75.

6) **Paul Reimers: "Wohin?"** (Victor 45065). My favorite version of "Wohin?" is on a Victor blue label disc that also features Mendelssohn's "Auf flügeln des gesanges." Unusual for an early lieder record, it is just about score-perfect and very much conforms to the way people today think lieder should be performed. The big plus here is that it is interpreted by a singer very well-trained in old-time bel canto. The result is magic. Pavarotti, Domingo, and Carreras couldn't sing like this if they tried. Best at 75 r.p.m.

7) **Pasquale Amato: "Eri tu?"** from Un Ballo In Maschera (Victor 88464). I tend to agree with critic John Steane that baritone Amato, at his considerable best, was touched with a singular greatness. I have innumerable versions of this aria (by Ancona, Battistini, de Luca, Ruffo, Stracciari, Tibbett, others) and Amato's seems best to me. Every subtle touch that Verdi asked for is here. Renato is a complex character, and Amato is the singer who best reveals Renato. 76.6 r.p.m.

8) **Alma Gluck: "L'heure exquise"** (Victor 64750). I once swapped the much rarer Carmela Ponselle performance of this on Columbia. My friend got the rarity; I got the singing. This record is just plain lovely. 76.6 r.p.m.

9) **Enrico Caruso: "Ah fuyez, douce image"** from Manon (Victor 88348; 1911). If I had to pick a disc to show someone who had never heard Caruso why the tenor occupies his place in operatic legend, this would probably be it. In spite of a very emotional performance, Caruso never abandons his dignity (I want to say "breeding") and grandeur—just right for des Grieux. 76 r.p.m.

10) **John McCormack: "Ben Bolt"** (Victor 64433; 1914). In The Grand Tradition John Steane singles out this record in his section on the Irish tenor. The song is short and simple—and is the kind of song that requires perfect tone, perfect breath, and great sensitivity to the words. No verismo singer need apply. Plays best at 75 r.p.m.



From the July 1921 issue of The Talking Machine World. Only the Delaware River separated Victor's Camden plant from Philadelphia wholesalers. Getting products to California, on the other hand, was difficult and TMW reported constant shortages of Victrolas in San Francisco.

MY TEN MOST PLAYED POPULAR VOCAL 78 RPM RECORDS

By Kurt Vrabel

1) **Arthur Tracy: "Street Singer Medley, Parts 1 and 2"** (Decca 295). Mr. Tracy shines brightly in this wonderful condensed version of his "greatest hits." As Tracy fans know, this type of performance is "business as usual" for the "Street Singer," who is one of those rare artists that never made a bad record.

2) **Annette Hanshaw: "Love Me Tonight"** (Perfect 12835). Miss Hanshaw's ability to project her personality onto wax is aptly demonstrated in this charming recording. Truly a gem.

3) **Bing Crosby with Paul Whiteman's Rhythm Boys: "Louise"** (Columbia 1771-D). Bing and the boys sounds as if they had a lot of fun making this novelty recording of Maurice Chevalier's signature tune. Great entertainment!

4) **Marion Harris: "The Man I Love"** (Victor 21116). Miss Harris benefitted greatly from the development of electrical recording. "The Man I Love" reveals her fine diction and vocal technique, which was hidden on her earlier, more primitive recordings.

5) **John Boles: "Romance"** (Victor 22230). The golden voice of John Boles helped to advance his career at the beginning of talking pictures. He sang beautifully in several films, but his total recorded output amounted to a mere ten sides. This is a pity since Boles had a splendid voice.

6) **Ruth Etting: "Smoke Gets In Your Eyes"** (Brunswick 6769). Miss Etting resists the temptation to over-dramatize or stray from the melody, thus producing the definitive version of this timeless ballad.

7) **Russ Columbo, with Jimmie Grier and His Orchestra: "I See Two Lovers"** (ARC Special Editions 5001-S). This is Columbo's last recording and perhaps his finest work. By 1934 his voice had developed a full, round, baritone quality. No doubt his accidental death that year ended what would have been a long, very successful career.

8) **Lucienne Boyer: "Parlez-moi d'amour"** (Columbia 205-M). Miss Boyer enjoyed great success as a cabaret artist and film star in her native France between the wars. Though the lyrics are in French, the song seems to speak the international language of love and romance.

9) **Jack Miller: "Beside An Open Fireplace"** (Diva 3090-G). In contrast to Rudy Vallee's popular recording, Miller offers a softer, intimate rendition which creates a torch song and brings out the lyrics beautifully.

10) **Kate Smith: "I Apologize"** (Clarion 5384-C). "The Great Kate" is wonderfully expressive here, demonstrating the depth of her lower register to great advantage. Miss Smith certainly need not "apologize" for this marvelous recording.

Kurt Vrabel lives in Taylor, Michigan.



TEN FAVORITE 78s -- *By Dan Nichols*

1) **Mattia Battistini (with Corsi et. al.): "O sommo Carlo" from Verdi's Ernani** (Victor 92046). This 1906 version is a hair raiser! It starts off in a subdued mood, so one is lulled by the beauty of the baritone voice. Then Battistini hits you by that optional B-flat, a genuine, full-throated blast right on the money, with a steady increase in volume. The tenor, soprano, and chorus all threaten to drown him out, but Battistini maintains his own.

2) **Clara Butt: "The Lost Chord"** (British Columbia DX754). An awe-inspiring rendition. Butt is like the Grand Canyon or Yosemite--a phenomenon! Perhaps her clashing registers are a vocal no-no, but they always bring out goosebumps. Near the conclusion even Butt herself seems overwhelmed with the power of her own voice.

3) **Enrico Caruso: "O tu che in seno" from Verdi's Forza del Destino** (Victor 6000). My copy is a 1930s "Z" pressing with acoustic label. The quiet surface allows one to hear Caruso at his very best. Caruso's rendition has spoiled, for me, newer recordings of the aria.

4) **Ernestine Schumann-Heink: "Leggiero Invisible"** (Victor 88093). She recorded Arditi's bolero three times, and this is my favorite. I bought this when I was 14 and have ever since marvelled at the technique and glowing voice. I have never run across another copy, nor have I seen it in another collection, so this being a so-called "common" version is clearly a matter of relativity.

5) **Elisabeth Rethberg, Beniamino Gigli, and Ezio Pinza: "Qual voluttà trascorrere" from Verdi's Lombardi** (RCA Victor 8194). Rethberg's energy, Gigli's sweetness and power, Pinza's thunderous basso--all create a ride that's unforgettable!

6) **John Charles Thomas: "Just For Today"** (RCA Victor 1736). This is a common record for good reason. Of Thomas' many fine recordings, I always "come home" to this one.

7) **Ezio Pinza: "Air du Tambour Major" from Thomas' Le Caid** (Victor 6710). This gets me marching around the room. Pinza's rich though very vibrant tone and his agile voice spoiled me from enjoying most subsequent bassos.

8) **John McCormack: "Una furtiva lagrima" from Donizetti's Elisir d'Amore** (Victor 88217). I am accustomed to hearing McCormack sing crossover material. Hearing him do this aria is a revelation.

9) **Billy Murray: "In My Merry Oldsmobile"** (Victor 4467). My interest in antique cars led to record collecting. The bulb horn honked in this first Victor take adds just the right touch.

10) **Billy Murray and Ed Smalle: "Ten Little Fingers and Ten Little Toes"** (Victor 18830). In 1957, this was the start of my record collecting. It expresses a father's joy over news of his newborn. Ed Smalle made records into the electric era, but I feel he is at his best when paired with Murray.

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1878-1928

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JOHN McCORMACK
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JANUARY 27th, 1929 at 3

TEN FAVORITE ITEMS FROM MY COLLECTION

By James Hedges

1) **H.M. Grenadier Guards Band: "Under The Double Eagle"** (Columbia 4238-M). My first record, still with the identifying pictures my mother pasted over the labels before I was able to read. The Grenadier Guards, reputedly the best of the British military bands, plays with dignity and grandeur usually missing from the helter-skelter scrambles of American bands. The ensemble is balanced and plays with great sensitivity. The recording engineers, unfortunately, added their "played in a gymnasium" sound-effect typical of 1930s discs.

2) **Creator's Band: "Syncopation"** (Victor 35759). A "symphonic" concert march played by the pre-eminent American band. Giuseppe Creator, who recorded for many years, was noted for precision and dramatic interpretation. His early Orthophonics are among the best commercial band recordings ever made.

3) **Arthur Middleton: "Captain Mac"** (Edison 80877). Middleton made many good records for Edison (sometimes as "Edward Allen") and for Pathé (as "Frank Oldfield"). His voice is always resonant and evenly modulated. "Captain Mac" has an interesting and well-balanced orchestral accompaniment, and the ballad is rendered with good expression. The words are more easily understood if an auxiliary large horn is added to the machine. Bass voices do not reproduce well on most acoustic machines because standard phonograph horns do not radiate the lowest 3 or 4 harmonics of bass notes.

4) **Collins & Harlan: "Ragtime Goblin Man"** (Edison 4m. 1071). My favorite comedy duo at their nonsensical best, with exceptional sound effects. The song must not have sold well because I have no versions of it on other labels, but it makes a hit with me.

5) **Billy Murray: "You Tell Her, I Stutter"** (Victor 18928). One of Murray's best. This is a record on which the stuttering sounds genuine. Compare his version to the wooden performance by Van and Schenck on Columbia.

6) **"Pietro Capodiferro: "Souvenir of Switzerland"** (Paramount 50025). He is not as well known as Clarke, Kryl, and the Levys, but Capodiferro was a cornetist of fine technique. He plays here a "fantasia brillante" more melodic and musical than many of the technical displays of that era.

7) **Ada Sassoli: "Am Springbrunnen"** (Victor 55102). The instrument, or voice, of a skilled musician becomes an extension of that person's mind and body. This is nowhere better displayed than in Sassoli's incredible "Am Springbrunnen" ("The Fountain"). No fumbling, no hesitation, no clams, just sheer joy. Compare this with the clumsy, pedal-thumping harp recording of "Angel's Serenade" by Charles Schuetze on Indestructible 3179.

8) **Claudia Muzio: "D' amor sull' ali rosee" from Il Trovatore** (Edison 82223). Muzio was a soprano with a smooth, lyrical voice. I prefer her crisp, bright Diamond Disc recordings to her darker, fuzzy Columbia electrical records.

9) **Gustav Heim: "Die Post im Wald"** (Edison 4m. 2444). Very little genuine brass chamber music is available on early recordings. Heim's trumpet recording is superb -- an introspective, simple melody accompanied by French horn quartet.

10) **José Mojica: "Eres Tu"** (Edison 80792). Gifted with a beautiful, limpid tenor voice and a wonderful sense of expression, Mojica left few recordings before giving it all up and going to South America as a missionary. All his Edison discs are treasures.

JAMES HEDGES LIVES IN BIG COVE TANNERY, PENNSYLVANIA.

TEN OUTSTANDING VOCAL RECORDS

By Sherman R. Emery

1) **Emma Calve:** "Ma Lisette" from Gounod's Le Printemps (Victor 88123; 1908). Bel canto singing at its best. Calve has remarkable breath control and an ability to sustain high notes.

2) **Sigrid Onegin:** "Ah! mon fils" from Meyerbeer's Le Prophète (Victor 6803; 1928). A true contralto voice with cello-like tones.

3) **Ernestine Schumann-Heink:** "Il segreto" from Donizetti's Lucrezia Borgia (Victor 85096; 1908). Another great contralto—her agility amazes me.

4) **Eleanor Steber:** "Summertime" from Gershwin's Porgy and Bess (Victor 11-9186; 1946). No singer has sung this song more beautifully. Steber is an underrated singer who is finally getting proper recognition.

5) **Edith Mason:** "Ancora un passo" from Puccini's Madama Butterfly (Brunswick 15096; 1924). Here is a Butterfly I would like to have heard in the opera house.

6) **Lotte Lehmann:** "Es gibt ein Reich" from Strauss' Ariadne auf Naxos (Odeon 20147; 1928). A favorite singer of mine, especially for works by Richard Strauss, with whom she worked closely.

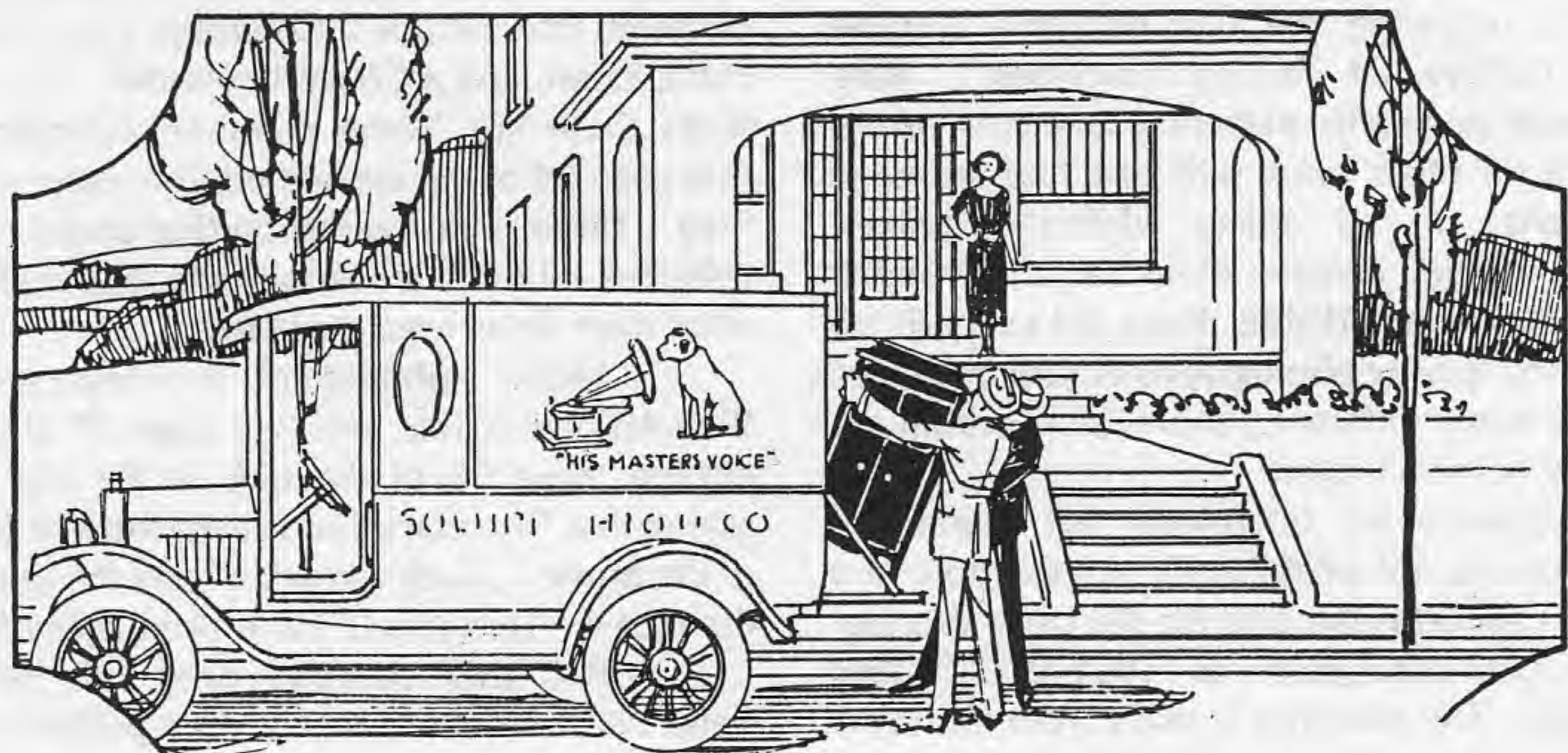
7) **Rosa Ponselle:** "D'amor sull' ali rosee" from Verdi's Il Travatore (Columbia 49559; 1918). If I were to pick one desert island singer, it would be Ponselle.

8) **Elisabeth Rethberg:** "Morro, ma prima in grazia" from Verdi's Un Ballo in Maschera (Victor 7393; 1930). Rethberg was a consummate artist.

9) **Claudia Muzio:** "Addio del passato" from Verdi's La Traviata (BQX 2508; 1935). Has any singer ever read the letter more plaintively?

10) **Jussi Bjorling:** "Ingemisco" from Verdi's Requiem (HMV DB3665; 1938). Tenor singing at its finest.

SHERMAN R. EMERY LIVES IN ELIOT, MAINE.



From the June 1923 issue of The Talking Machine World. Text under this drawing declares that a client's home is "a dealer's best salesroom." Machines were often delivered to homes on a trial basis. Radio was hurting the talking machine industry, and innovative sales methods were needed.

NEW BOOK: The Compleat Talking Machine

By Eric Reiss

Sonoran Publishing (ISBN 1-886606-08-0)

Reviewed By Tim Gracyk

Here is a revised and expanded version of a popular repair guide originally published by Vestal Press a decade ago.

The revised edition has only a few more tips about restoring machines. More significant is an expanded machine identification section, which may justify the book's cost to those who already own the first edition. Also added is a price guide.

I have compared the first edition's 184 pages with the revised edition's 236 pages. Strengths of the first edition are strengths of the revised, but some old weaknesses remain. If this 1996 book were a first edition, I could happily overlook weaknesses and celebrate the many strengths. The revised book is better than the old but I am struck by ways it should be stronger. I hold revised books to very high standards.

Among strengths is the excellent writing. Reiss' prose is free of jargon and the stuffy tone that spoils much technical writing.

The spectacular "Identification" section is 80 pages, replacing the first edition's 20-page "Picture Gallery Of Talking Machines." Rare machines on page after page may take your breath away. In no other book will one find so many photographs of so many different makes. Close-ups of small items--a stylus bar, a Polyphone attachment--are remarkable. Reiss did a superb job of collecting quality photographs of rare machines owned by many different people, all of whom are graciously acknowledged.

Captions are interesting but sources of information are not established. An example of a troubling caption is the one for the Little Wonder machine, with dates given as "1901-1912." That is too early. The machine is really from the WWI era, the same as Little Wonder discs, but contrary to Reiss' implication, Little Wonder machines made by the Boston Talking Machine Company have no formal connection with The Little Wonder

Record Company of New York (Reiss states Little Wonder discs came with the machine). The machine can play vertical-cut discs. That alone suggests the machine was not made specially for Little Wonder discs, which are lateral-cut.

After discussing the Autophone and Rosenfield Automatic Phonograph, the fascinating identification section concludes with a page on these "interesting accessories": dancing phonograph dolls, the Jones Motrola (Reiss states "c. 1925" but the Motrola's heyday was really the late 'teens and early 'twenties), a Bristolphon attachment that allows for amplification, via a radio speaker, for a disc spinning on an acoustic machine ("c. 1925" is a good guess--The Talking Machine World introduced it in August 1926). The book has similar "extras" that make for fun reading.

I like the informative captions given for visuals but also wish Reiss had revised old captions that were problematic the first time they appeared. He reprints from the first edition a photograph of cylinders that include a Columbia 20th Century, a Pathé Salon, and a Concert cylinder. The caption states these are "some common cylinder types" (see page 58 of the revised edition, page 71 of the first). There is no corresponding photo of "rare" cylinders. If these are among the "common" ones, what does Reiss regard as rare?

Under a photograph showing a crack at a Blue Amberol's title end (see page 79 of the new edition, page 96 of the old) is the old caption saying that "the crack has ruined the first few bars of the music." Such a crack affects the last bars of the music. This should have been corrected.

Publisher Sonoran does full justice to Reiss' text and photographs. The publisher of the first edition used a poor typeset, with letters being too thick and dark for easy reading. Sonoran's thinner, crisp typeset is reader friendly. Whereas pages of the Vestal Press edition have too much

white space, photographs and text in the new edition fill the pages, with some photographs from the previous edition enlarged.

Reiss' restoration tips are very helpful even if he recommends to the average collector some steps better left to those with considerable experience. Electroplating is only one example.

The first edition lacked warnings about replacing motor springs, a job I leave to others. In the new edition Reiss at least urges one to wear "protective eye covering and...a long sleeved shirt to guard against cuts." He also states that anyone nervous or lacking strength to keep springs under control should "refer the work to a professional." These added words make this section stronger.

But Reiss did not address other problems of the old edition. In the springs section, Reiss again includes a photograph of someone using a screwdriver to pry upwards the center of a tightly wound spring (see page 12 of the revised edition, page 22 of the old). Instead of providing a caption warning that this is what one must never do, Reiss states approvingly, "The center coils can be pried up with a screwdriver."

Although the main text has some new paragraphs—for example, nine paragraphs are added about the Victor Concert soundbox, with credit given to MAPS' In The Groove—the text is basically as before. Do weaknesses remain because nobody pointed out problems when the first edition appeared?

The "Contents" page is as unhelpful as before (there is no index to compensate). Many topics are listed but only four pages are cited to represent the main text: pages 1, 45, 87, and 123. The Contents page shows that a gaskets discussion is somewhere between pages 45 and 87. Readers must do some hunting.

Another weakness is Reiss' suggestion that collectors make replacement styli out of thin glass rods, the kind sold at arts and crafts stores. As in the first edition, he emphasizes the money saved when one uses glass styli, which will "make back the price of this book in no time flat" (62). This is false economy.

I realize that jewelled styli (sapphire or diamond) were once hard to get unless collectors came across original dealer stock, so making one's own glass styli was perhaps a necessary evil. At least a few decades ago cylinders were cheaper to replace if damaged. Today, manufacturers such as Expert Stylus Company sell precisely-ground jewelled styli, and collectors should disregard Reiss' advice about making their own. Glass, a soft substance, will flatten before one realizes cylinders are being harmed (Reiss says one "ought to get a hundred playings"—making your own stylus sounds like a lot of trouble for only so few playings). Glass may chip or crack while playing a recording, at which point it is a cutting tool.

If Reiss uses glass for cylinders, then preserving recordings must not be a priority. He addresses this point by saying that "serious" record collectors are not likely to use "this type of reproducer anyway"—they do indeed use original reproducers for two-minute cylinders! That he recommends glass indicates he cuts some corners. I suppose if one wishes to replace the stylus of a machine not used for listening purposes—something for display, such as a Puck—then glass may suffice.

We can make a distinction between Reiss as restoration expert and Reiss as phonograph historian. Facts about the industry are generally correct but I am surprised that errors of the first edition are repeated. They are small but an author should correct even these when revising a text. I learned, when discussing industry pioneers with Allen Koenigsberg, that Henri Lioret died in 1938 but Reiss again says 1948. Diamond Disc technology was introduced in late 1912, not 1913. Discussing Robert Baumbach's Look For The Dog, Reiss again credits Eldridge R. Johnson for producing machines until 1929, but Johnson was no longer responsible for Victor products after he sold his shares of Victor stock in December 1926.

The Johnson error is in the bibliography, which begins on page 233. The new bibliography is longer than the old, with seven new entries for books published in the last decade. I wish Reiss had mentioned that additional restoration tips are

in articles in specialized publications—better, I wish Reiss had listed such articles. The bibliography is good for those interested in history and machine identification. It is not as helpful for anyone seeking additional restoration tips.

The new book has the old title, and I question its suitability. It is far from "compleat," saying almost nothing about talking machines made after the outside horn heyday. It may not satisfy those who wish to restore only, say, a Victrola IV, VI, IX, X, XI, or 50. It gives no help for those restoring a Brunswick console, Panatrope, Cheney model, Columbia table model, Viva-Tonal. Need to repair pneumatic lid supports on talking machines made in the mid to late 'twenties? The book is silent on this and other matters.

Reiss says nothing about flywheels on certain Amberola models. They need to be repaired on occasion, such as when a balance wire breaks. Late cylinder machines receive little attention.

Reiss limits his treatment of Diamond Disc technology to a few photographs of reproducers and the observation that "early Diamond reproducers have a rice paper laminate [and] late model Diamond reproducers have a cork-stiffened copper diaphragm" (70). This is repeated from the first edition, and I still wonder how copper diaphragms can be stiffened with cork. Certainly cork was used with rice paper diaphragms. But cork and copper? George Frow's The Edison Disc Phonographs describes diaphragms made of "layers of rice paper and shellac, cork centre and 'ivory' button" and also states that rare Edison lateral-cut reproducers had aluminum diaphragms. Frow says nothing about copper. Reiss, when revising, could have clarified his copper diaphragm remark.

No one volume on phonographs can be complete, and I marvel at Reiss' boldness in calling his book complete, or "compleat." The Compleat Outside Horn Talking Machine might be more fitting. I concede that a truly honest title, such as A Repair And Identification Guide To Talking Machines, would be weak from a marketing perspective. Why "compleat" instead of "complete"?

More evidence of Reiss' preoccupation

with the industry's early years, notwithstanding the "compleat" in the title, is in Appendix A. It is also an example of Reiss merely duplicating a section from the old edition instead of making substantial improvements. The revised edition's "Historical Names" is almost identical to the first edition's. Two differences are that the revised section omits the five-line biography of John Kruesi and Reiss now calls Frank Seaman a "scoundrel" (220).

This "Historical Names" section gives facts about industry giants such as Edward Amet, Emile Berliner, Werner Suess, and 16 others. It could have been named "Historical Names of the 19th Century" except the inclusion of Daniel Higham and Charles Parsons takes us up to 1905. Why Higham and Parsons but not Edward Easton, Leon F. Douglass, Joseph W. Jones, Louis P. Valiquet? They were far more important. Why ignore this century's major figures? Otto Heineman is missing but should be in any list of industry innovators. Heineman's General Phonograph Corporation arguably revolutionized the industry in the 'teens and 'twenties by making the motors, tonearms, and other parts needed for dozens of other companies to market machines. Forest Cheney? Orthophonic pioneers? Reiss seems indifferent towards 20th century talking machine developments.

The revised edition includes a machine price guide, the preface of which establishes reasonable assumptions for a price guide. Reiss states, "[T]he prices indicated here are not necessarily auction prices—as far as possible, they indicate the prices you'd expect to pay in the U.S. on the open market for these machines...The prices indicated are for clean, complete, working machines with no reproduction parts."

But Reiss' guide will not satisfy advanced collectors since he underprices rare machines, citing prices perhaps typical of the 1970s, certainly not of the 1990s. The guide will frustrate beginning collectors and most antiques dealers since it ignores common machines, with a few exceptions. It is less thorough and accurate than Gilbert Pasley's Pocket Guide to Antique Musical Machine Values, a work published in 1994 that

Reiss fails to cite as a predecessor. Reiss also seems unaware of Ray Wilenzick's annual Phonograph Auction Prices.

Not every machine can be included in 11 pages, and I do not look for an exhaustive listing. What I regret is this guide's imbalance. Outside horn machines are wonderfully represented whereas internal horn machines are represented by token models.

The guide opens by defining "rare," the first hint that Reiss will focus on elusive items. We learn on page 208 that a pre-1894 Bell-Tainter cylinder machine is worth from \$12,000 to \$20,000. Does any person in the special position to buy such a museum piece really need a price guide? I cannot say if his ranges for incredibly rare machines are accurate and will instead discuss his prices for the more affordable machines.

A price guide that covers common machines is needed. People often ask on the Internet what they should pay (or charge, if selling) for a Victrola XI. But Reiss is silent about this model that is for sale so often today. It was renamed the No. 90 in 1921 but Reiss ignores all Arabic numbered Victrolas aside from the 230. Why a rare console instead of the 210 or 215? The 230 is priced too low at \$150-250 and is wrongly called "typical." The "art case" 230 is priced at \$1,500-2,000.

The Victrola XIV also sold well decades ago and is therefore a machine that beginning collectors and antiques dealers often buy and sell today. What is a fair price? It is not in this price guide, not even as the renamed No. 110.

Reiss basically ignores Brunswick and Sonora machines. He gives Brunswick one line: "Brunswick table model (typical)...\$100-150." What about the many Brunswick uprights and consoles? The electric Panatrope of 1925? The acoustic Panatrope introduced in 1926?

Sonora is represented by this one line: "Sonora 'Supreme' (typical ornate floor model)... \$2,000-3,000." That sounds inflated to me, a rare instance of Reiss over-valuing a machine, though perhaps its majestic appearance attracts such high prices. The price guide says nothing about more

ordinary Sonora machines.

Thirty Columbia cylinder machines are listed. Reiss clearly admires early machines. Columbia uprights made from 1909 to 1930 are lumped together this way: "Columbia Grafonola (typical floor model) . . . 150-250." Reiss then adds, "Columbia Grafonola (special case models) ...300-1,500." If dealers with Columbia uprights consult Reiss' guide, they will scratch their heads. What is a "special case model" and does one charge \$300 or \$1,500?

Reiss is so vague about portables, giving one wide range to cover all, that the price guide might as well be silent on the subject. His range: "Suitcase-type portables (typical)...50-200."

Reiss lists the Victrola XVI, or 16, at \$150-250. How do we avoid concluding that he is out of touch with 1990s prices? Try \$700-1,000 for the more common XVI's.

On the other hand, Reiss does an excellent job giving ranges for Edison machines. He lists the Amberola 30 at \$300-500, the Amberola 50 at \$400-600, and the C-200 ("Adam") at \$450-600. Edison prices are on target with only one or two exceptions. His range of \$1,000-\$1,500 for the Diamond Disc Model 150 (both the A and B) may be about twice what the range should be.

Reiss gives thanks to two individuals in England for their help with the guide: Christopher Proudfoot of Christie's and Proudfoot's colleague George Glastris. Reiss himself lives in Denmark. The obvious problem--that three people living on the other side of the Atlantic are not in the best position to cite current prices for machines in the "open market" of the United States--is not addressed in the guide's preface.

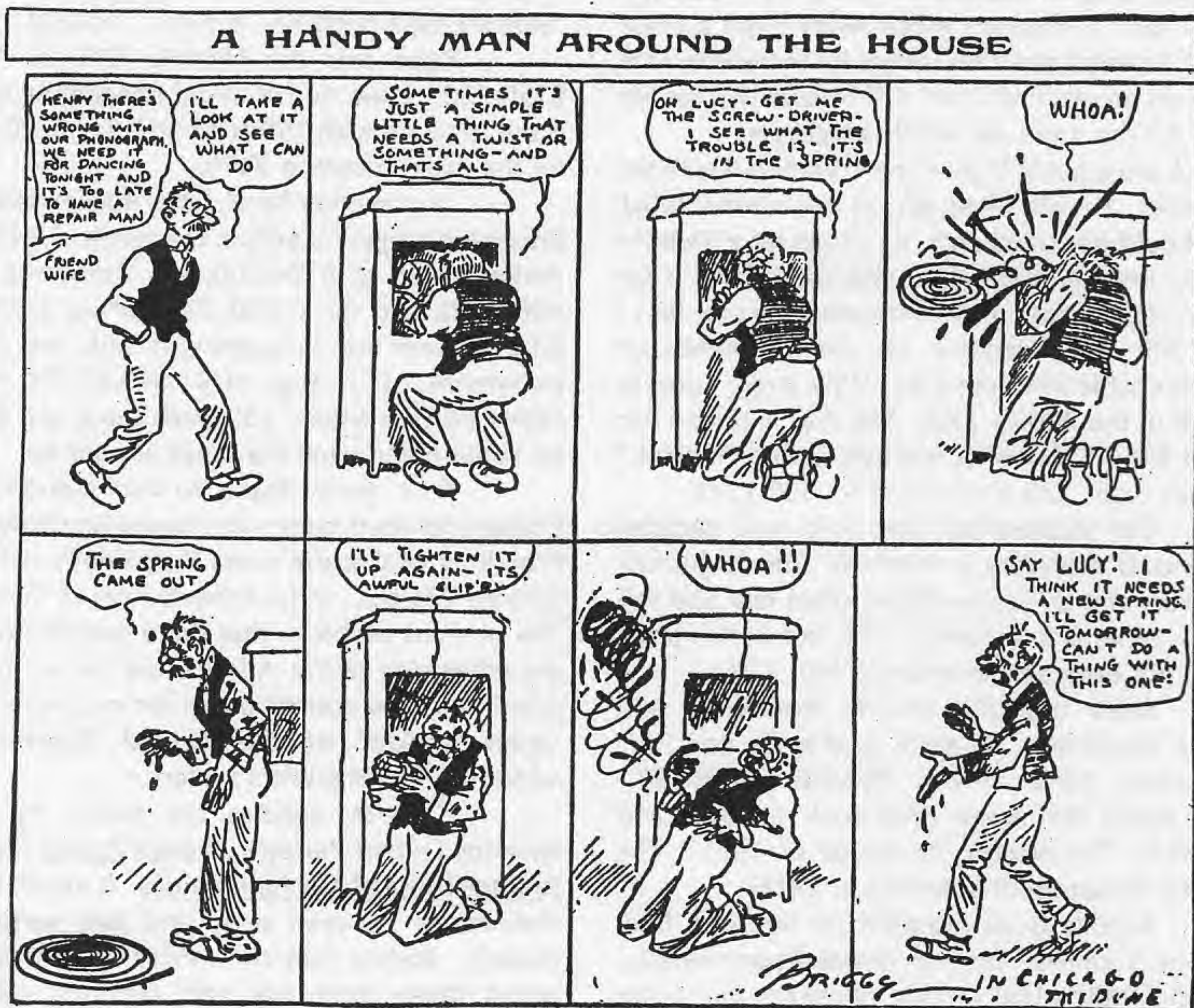
If Reiss updates his guide, he might examine Gilbert Pasley's 26-page Pocket Guide to Antique Musical Machine Values. It makes crucial distinctions between early and late versions of models. Rather than cite ranges, it cites specific prices taken from ads and auctions, allowing readers to deduce what range is realistic for any given model. In contrast to Reiss citing \$150-250 for the exquisite Victrola XVI, Pasley cites the

more realistic figures of \$1000 for an oak L-door machine (taken from a 1992 ad), \$700 for another L-door machine (this time in mahogany—a 1993 ad), and so on, with one ad for a XVI in mahogany quoted at \$575. Whereas Reiss has the Edison Diamond Disc 150 priced too high at \$1,000-\$1,500, Pasley shows—without making judgments about whether it is high or low—that someone in 1993 placed an ad to sell an A-150 in mahogany for \$200.

Machine collectors should own The Compleat Talking Machine in one edition or the other. V78 readers who consider themselves primarily machine collectors—as opposed to collectors of

vintage recordings—probably already own the first edition. Few will need the revised edition in addition to the first though, as I said before, the expanded "Identification" section may justify the cost. Beginners should buy this second edition. If Reiss has an opportunity to revise yet again, I hope he adds enough about talking machines of the 'teens and 'twenties to make the book truly "compleat."

In soft-cover, The Compleat Talking Machine is available postpaid for \$29.95 from Allen Koenigsberg, 502 E. 17th St., Brooklyn NY 11226 (phone 718-941-6835). Mention V78 and 100 steel needles are included with orders!



This first appeared in The Chicago Tribune and was reprinted in the June 1919 issue of The Talking Machine World with the comment that here is "why talking machine repair men make money." The wife wants the machine fixed "for dancing." Dance crazes in the 'teens sold many machines.

NEW BOOK: World War I Songs

By Frederick G. Vogel

McFarland & Company, Inc. (ISBN 0-89950-952-5)

Reviewed by Tim Gracyk

This 530-page book covering World War I songs mentions not a single recording but is nonetheless a welcome addition to my reference library. Wish to know the year or composer of a war song recorded by, say, Arthur Fields or Billy Murray? That work is listed here, probably with lyrics cited. The book's long subtitle summarizes this work's contents: "A History and Dictionary of Popular American Patriotic Tunes, With Over 300 Complete Lyrics."

Vogel lists over 7,000 songs that refer to the war and were published between mid-1914 and mid-1919. This list of what was published is about 20 percent of the 35,600 patriotic songs copyrighted by thousands of writers. Vogel calls his compilation "of American World War I patriotic and war songs" the most comprehensive of its kind. He is a careful scholar, listing song titles and composers exactly as they appear on sheet music.

The long index includes familiar names--Arthur Fields (he co-wrote seven songs listed here), James Reese Europe, Eubie Blake, J. Tim Brymn, Van and Schenck, Geoffrey O'Hara, Enrico Caruso (he wrote "Liberty Forever" with Vincenzo Bellezza), Nora Bayes. Vogel lists these names because of their wartime compositions. One would not know from this book that they were also recording artists.

Introductory essays total nearly 150 pages. They focus as much on WWII as WWI but are well-written. The book's third section gives lyrics of 321 notable songs, with some sheet music covers duplicated. The essays and captions for sheet music establish Vogel as a song authority.

I searched for my favorite war-related songs of the era and found them. I can identify only one song missing: "San Francisco," by Sam M. Lewis and George W. Meyer. The title of this song promoting the 1915 Panama-Pacific International Exposition disguises the lyrics' preoccupation with

the European conflict, so I understand why it was overlooked. Consider these lines sung by Arthur Fields on Columbia A1699:

*Send out your invitations
Don't forget the foreign nations
Make them stop their plottin'
All will be forgotten
When they're Turkey Trottin'
To a Yankee melody
We'll mend that map of Europe
We'll end that scrap in Europe
At that San-Fran Pan American fair!*

A few songs making no allusions to the war are inexplicably listed, such as Callahan and Roberts' "Smiles." John L. Golden and Raymond Hubbell's "Poor Butterfly" also does not fit. Vogel justifies its inclusion by saying the song "reflected the sadness of war in its tale of one Japanese girl whose American sailor boyfriend had presumed been lost at sea." Presumed by whom? Lyrics say nothing about a sailor lost at sea, and why he has not returned is open to interpretation. Those familiar with Puccini's Madama Butterfly will interpret the absence as indicating the broken promise of a cad, nothing more.

Vogel duplicates lyrics to Max Kortlander and J. Will Callahan's popular "Tell Me (Why Nights Are Lonesome)" but, again, nothing in the song hints at war. By the time Al Jolson recorded it for Columbia in October 1919, the fighting had been over for nearly a year.

Like most books covering a specialized topic, this is expensive, but Vogel's reference work on World War I songs could not be much better.

For a postpaid copy of World War I Songs, send \$88 to McFarland & Company, Inc, Box 611, Jefferson NC 28640. Or call 1-800-253-2187.

NEW BOOK: The Fred Waring Discography

Compiled by Peter T. Kiefer

Greenwood Press (ISBN 0-313-29910-2)

Reviewed By Tim Gracyk

This is the kind of book that Greenwood generally does better than other publishers. Take a specialized musical topic (in this case, Fred Waring), focus some more (this is discographic--no biographical facts, no discussion of influence or popularity), and be exhaustive! Here is everything that Fred Waring recorded from late 1923, beginning with the popular "Sleep" on Victor 19172, to the 1970s.

Peter T. Kiefer seems uniquely qualified for compiling Waring information. He is Coordinator of Fred Waring's America (a collection held by the Pennsylvania State University Libraries), served as Director of the Fred Waring Music Workshops, and was Company Manager of The Fred Waring Show.

Song titles are given alphabetically. Listed under each is every known commercial format. A later section lists recording sessions. Then comes a LP list. I looked for the LP The Romantic Sound of Fred Waring, found nothing, then hunted. A note for the LP All The Things You Are states, "Previously Released As 'The Romantic Sounds of Fred Waring and the Pennsylvanians.'" How is one to know to look under the subsequent, not the original, title?

Kiefer next pays tribute to Waring's arrangers, listing who arranged which songs. He singles out Roy Ringwald, Hawley Ades and Harry Simeone for establishing the "Waring sound" of the '40s, '50s and '60s. He does not say when Waring's arrangers were most active. I suspect banjoist Fred C. Buck, or Freddy Buck, was Waring's first. In 1924, advertisements for the Weymann Orchestra Banjo showed the young Buck holding a Weymann instrument. He is identified as "Banjoist and Arranger."

Next is a section on the 305 recordings made in 1949 and 1950 by the Pennsylvanians Glee Club for the "Waring-Lang-Worth Transcribed Program Service." Most were for radio only.

I wish the book were not strictly discographic. Few are better qualified to write about Waring than Kiefer, who contributed a fine essay on Waring's early years to an 1968 RCA LP titled Waring's Pennsylvanians. This book says so little about the bandleader himself that I had to consult other books to learn that Waring died in 1983.

A marketing problem for this book is that Fred Waring underwent a radical transformation (perhaps a few) in his very long career. Simply put, the early Waring sound is very different from the later sound. Distinguishing between early and late Waring recordings is easy since he made no commercial recordings from 1933 to 1941. I happily listen to anything Waring recorded in that first decade, from 1923 to 1933. Some of Waring's Victors are among the best of the Orthophonic era, with "Collegiate," "I've Never Seen A Straight Banana," "I Love The College Girls," and "Hello Montreal!" being outstanding.

The late Waring might be considered "square" by some, but the earlier Waring was bold in recording Cole Porter's "Love For Sale" on December 24, 1930--only weeks after Porter's show The New Yorkers opened on Broadway. This song about a prostitute who opens "shop" in an empty street was attacked for being tasteless. Waring was first to record it.

The Three Girl Friends introduced the song during the Philadelphia tryout of The New Yorkers, and the trio backed vocalist Kathryn Crawford when the show opened in New York (Elisabeth Welch soon sang it in the show instead of Crawford). According to Frank Buxton and Bill Owen's The Big Broadcast, 1920-1950, the trio consisted of June Taylor, Ida Pierce, and Stella Friend. Kiefer does not name them. Copies of Victor 25080 state that the Three Waring Girls sing "Love For Sale" but Kiefer cites the Three Girl Friends. I know from other books (not Kiefer's)

that they are the same. A discographer should cite the name that appears on a disc and then in a note give further identification. Also, Kiefer is inconsistent. For "High And Low" (Victor 22708), recorded six months later, the label states that, again, the Three Waring Girls sing a vocal refrain. This time Kiefer identifies the trio by that name.

Many who appreciate Waring's early music seem indifferent towards his later recordings. V78J readers who appreciate only Waring's early period will not find this book essential since discographic information for early Waring is in Brian Rust's The American Dance Band Discography: 1917-1942. Rust gives names of band members. Kiefer does not.

Kiefer cites song composers, and I value such information, but he is careless here. A minor objection is that he is inconsistent with citations. Sometimes a full name is given ("Cole Porter"), other times a last name with first initial ("G. Cohan" and "J. Kern"), other times only a last name ("Donaldson"). The composers of "Long Ago and Far Away" are cited as "Jerome Kern & I. Gershwin." Why not replace "I." with "Ira"?

Worse, Kiefer is often incorrect. Comparing names in his book with those on Waring discs, I find that Kiefer's errors add up quickly. He must not have used discs as his source for composers. Whereas many discs give full names, Kiefer rarely does. Labels of the major companies were nearly always reliable about composer information, including spelling, and Kiefer would have done well to take names straight from Waring discs. His flawed source for composers of Waring recordings is not mentioned.

He credits "Freddy Buck & Morse" for "Dear Old Girl." This is an old and famous song, recorded by Richard Jose in 1903 and by Waring a half-century later on October 25, 1953. Richard Henry Buck—not Waring banjoist Freddy Buck—wrote the words for Theodore F. Morse's music.

Franz Lehar is given as "Franz Lehor" for the song "Vilia" and "Frany Lehar" for "Yours Is My Heart Alone." For "Oh Baby" Kiefer credits "Walter & Donaldson," but its composers were Buddy DeSylva and Walter Donaldson. Waring

recorded "Sweetheart of Sigma Chi" three times, and three times Kiefer gives F. Dudleigh Vernor's name as "Vernon." Jesse Greer, co-composer of "Freshie," is called "Green." Benny Davis ("Here Or There As Long As I'm With You") is called "Virgil Davis." Nora Bayes and Jack Norworth ("Shine On, Harvest Moon") are called "Bayers & Norwith." Ted Fiorito is "Frouito" as well as "Fiorita," Kurt Weill is "Weil," and Mac Ohman is "Ahman." Frank Signorelli and Phil Napoleon ("Just Hot") are "Segnorelli" and "Napolean." Cliff Friend ("June Night") is "Fuend." There are many similar errors. Songwriters deserve better.

On many titles Kiefer omits question marks, commas, and exclamation marks. Victor 20378 features "Where Do You Work-a, John?" but Kiefer makes five tiny changes, giving it as "Where Do Ya Work A John." Why the changes?

Those who desire information about late Waring recordings may appreciate this book. For Waring's first decade of recording, Rust's information is more detailed and satisfying.

For a postpaid copy of The Fred Waring Discography, send \$69.00 to Greenwood Publishing Group, 88 Post Rd. West. Box 5007, Westport CT 06881. Or call 800-225-5800.



Recorded on December 29, 1947.

NEW CD: 57 Different Kinds of Blues

PianoMania CD-130

Reviewed by Tim Gracyk

In the last V78 I praised PianoMania's A Ragtime Primer. The company has since issued a CD that will interest V78 readers as much. The approach is similar. On one CD are a dozen respected pianists who perform popular piano music of the past; today's best Disklavier technology is used; a generous amount of music is featured (here, 74 minutes--A Ragtime Primer is 76 minutes); classics are mixed with obscure works that deserve to be better known. Whereas the earlier CD takes a purist approach to ragtime, the new CD focuses on blues as it was played in the 'teens and slightly later.

This CD demonstrates the importance of solo piano to the early development of blues. Richard Riley writes in the CD notes, "Most modern writers have focused on the rural/Delta blues which were performed by guitar players." I find myself agreeing as I flip through Lawrence Cohn's Nothing But The Blues--perhaps the most comprehensive history of blues in print--and as I examine other blues histories. Those who know popular music of the past only through recordings might easily overlook the importance of piano to the development of blues. No black pianists recorded blues in the 'teens. When I listen to Marion Harris's 1916 "Paradise Blues" (Victor 18152), I am struck by Walter Hirsch's lyrics about blues piano and wish the Ragtime Lew mentioned here had been able to record:

*Down old Mobile way
In a cabaret
There sits Ragtime Lew
He can show you how to "blue"
On that piano...*

How closely can pianists today duplicate blues as played eight decades ago? Sheet music and piano rolls help us understand how the music was played. The CD features several accomplished pianists who are also authorities on popular piano

rolls and sheet music--Mike Montgomery, Richard Zimmerman, Elliott Adams, Trebor Tichenor.

When first published, some songs featured here had been recorded on disc, with others cut on rolls. One classic recorded on disc and cut on a roll is "Birmingham Blues." Thomas Waller made his recording debut with this in 1922 (Okeh 4757). Later he was "Fats" on recordings. James P. Johnson made a QRS piano roll which was issued in September 1922. That performance is duplicated here by Mike Montgomery.

Those who know recordings of "Yellow Dog Blues" and "Canal Street Blues" may be struck by how the songs are transformed when played as piano solos. "Canal Street Blues," best known as recorded by King Oliver's band on April 6, 1923, is played here by Molly Kaufmann. I can never listen long to versions of "Yellow Dog Blues" before I hear, in my mind, the laughing trombone of Joseph C. Smith's 1919 Victor recording. Trebor Tichenor takes "Yellow Dog Blues" at a slow pace, so I can almost block from my memory Raderman's trombone and Smith's laughing.

The CD notes reports that "Mama's Gone, Goodbye," played here by Mike Montgomery, was recorded by Bonnie Raitt and Sippie Wallace in the early '80s--true, but also in late 1923 for Victor by composer Armand J. Piron himself, or by Piron's New Orleans Orchestra.

Scott Kirby's performance of Cow Cow Davenport's "Atlantic Rag" is dazzling. I regret that Kirby is represented by only one selection but am happy to hear for the first time pianists Tamás Ittzés (from Hungary), Jim Hession, Tom Brier, and Gale Foehner. Impressive!

The CD opens with Robert Hoffman's "I'm Alabama Bound," not to be confused with the 1925 hit "Alabamy Bound." Hoffman's gem is played here as published in 1909--a ragtime two-step for solo piano. Prince's Band recorded it as Columbia A-901 in 1910, giving it a fine military band treatment. Like rags of the period, it has

distinct strains (A BB A CC A), none in the 12-bar form typical of blues. It opens this CD because, remarkably, the first edition of the sheet music states, "Also Known as The Alabama Blues." Note here the beginning of a trend: a song subtitle is putting the word "blues" after another word. The next examples are from 1912: "Memphis Blues," "Dallas Blues," and "Baby Seals Blues." Thereafter, for a decade, "blues" was placed after every conceivable adjective.

"I'm Alabama Bound" has a complex history worth mentioning here because of the early blues subtitle and the song's similarity to Jelly Roll Morton's famous "Don't You Leave Me Here." Morton states in Alan Lomax's Mister Jelly Roll, "[W]hen I hit Mobile in 1905, I wrote 'Alabama Bound' and all my friends considered it very good." Morton does not mention white composer Hoffman, also from New Orleans, but Hoffman's song had been popular, so Morton is basically implying theft. Was Morton himself claiming credit for a folk strain actually known to many? Missouri's Blind Boone published in 1908-09 a rag medley using the same A section melody.

At what point did Morton's "Alabama Bound" take the title "Don't You Leave Me Here"?

Laura Smith recorded it in early 1927, as did Charlie Johnson's Paradise Orchestra, which featured Monette Moore singing about being "Alabama bound." Morton in 1938 and 1939 recorded versions of "Don't You Leave Me Here" for commercial release but fragments he sang for the Library of Congress on May 23, 1938 are called "Alabama Bound." (Then Louis Jordan recorded "Alabama Bound" as did Leadbelly with The Golden Gate Jubilee Quartet, Lomax supervising the session. Leadbelly uses only the first strain of Hoffman's "I'm Alabama Bound," and the words are those of "Don't You Leave Me Here.")

The CD notes say a little about the song's history, and Richard Zimmerman's article "The First Published Blues?" in The Rag Times (January 1995) says more. The song's history is worth even further exploration.

PianoMania provides an invaluable service in making available wonderful performances of piano works from the past.

For a postpaid copy of 57 Different Kinds of Blues, send \$17.00 to PianoMania Music, 8300 Sierra College Blvd, Suite D, Roseville CA 95661. Phone: (916) 791-8079.

Title
1. Alabama Bound (The Alabama Blues)
2. I'm A Stationary Woman . . .
3. Organ Grinder Blues
4. Birmingham Blues
5. Yellow Dog Blues
6. Canal Street Blues
7. Fort Worth Blues
8. Fattening Frogs For Snakes
9. King Of The Zulus
10. Aunt Hagar's Blues
11. You've Got The Right Key, But . . .
12. Shave 'Em Dry
13. Colorado Blues
14. Down And Out Blues
15. Mamie's Blues
16. Atlanta Rag
17. Buddy Bolden's Blues
18. Mama's Gone, Goodbye
19. Oh! Those Blues
20. Corrina Corrina
21. 57 Diff'rent Kinds Of Blues

Pianist	Time
Richard Zimmerman	3:52
Tamás Ittész	4:26
Gale Foehner	5:09
Mike Montgomery	3:36
Trebor Tichenor	3:54
Molly Kaufmann	3:14
Tom Brier	3:05
Elliott Adams	3:46
David T. Roberts	2:36
Jim Hession	4:49
John Gill	3:33
Elliott Adams	3:53
Richard Zimmerman	2:34
Molly Kaufmann	2:27
David T. Roberts	2:48
Scott Kirby	3:17
Gale Foehner	3:44
Mike Montgomery	3:47
Richard Zimmerman	2:38
Gale Foehner	2:52
Elliott Adams	4:01
Total Time	74:01

NEW CD: Before the Blues: Volumes 1-3

Yazoo 2015, 2016, 2017

Reviewed by Frank M. Young

Before The Blues is Yazoo's most ambitious—and frustrating—effort to date. The series' three volumes explore the strong link between Caucasian and Afro-American music before blues became excessively formatted and stylized. During this transitional period of the mid-1920s to the early '30s, oral folk traditions of the 18th and 19th centuries were excitingly mingled with the more modern, distinctively urban sounds of ragtime and jazz.

The series' title and packaging are misleading. There are no recordings, among the 69 selections, that are technically "before the blues." This would mean three CDs of pre-1920 pieces, if you accept Derrick Stewart-Baxter's assertion in Ma Rainey and the Classic Blues Singers that Mamie Smith's "That Thing Called Love" was "the first recording ever made by a black blues singer." The series' booklet covers and back panels are misleading in featuring photographs from the turn of the century or earlier. These CDs present not pre-blues recordings but pre-blues traditions of music that rapidly disappeared by the end of the 1930s. Most of the material shares a strongly modal, folky feeling.

Although many of the 69 pieces in this series were called "blues" when first released, their melodies and structures hold many surprises: unexpected shifts in tempo, eccentric chord patterns and time-signatures, and an emotional, uninhibited style of performance that became more urbanized and muted throughout the '30s.

Ragtime strains dominate in several selections, such as the Tennessee Chocolate Drops' "Vine Street Drag," Frank Stokes' "Chicken You Can Roost Behind the Moon," Minnie Wallace's "The Old Folks Started It," with boozy Memphis Jug Band accompaniment, and "Easy Winner" and "Memphis Stomp," a pair of jaunty toe-tapping instrumentals by the Blue Boys, including Lonnie Johnson's fiddling on the latter piece.

Best of all is the lively, minor-keyed "Cold Morning Shout" by the South Street Trio, which includes the venerable duo Bobby Leecan and Robert Cooksey. The delicate, ancient quality of the trio's performance and the casual structure of the tune haunt the listener. "Cold Morning Shout" epitomizes the series' "before the blues" feeling.

Several pieces are included for their status as pre-blues standards: "Run Mollie Run" and "Fox and the Hounds" by Henry Thomas, "Dupree Blues" by Willie Walker, "Stack O'Lee Blues" and "Spike Driver's Blues" by Mississippi John Hurt, "House Carpenter" by Clarence Ashley, "Mississippi Bo Weevil Blues" by Charlie Patton, and "John Hardy," in versions by Buell Kazee and the team Joe Evans & Arthur McClain.

The set's best, and most revealing, material is less known: Andrew and Jim Baxter's "Bamalong Blues"; "Soft Steel Piston," a 1927 instrumental piece by Sylvester Weaver and Walter Beasley; Blind Joe Taggart's spiritual "Been Listening All The Day," which showcases gritty, close-harmony vocals, vicious fiddling and a galloping pace; and Peg Leg Howell's "Skin Game Blues," which moves in unexpected directions, truly hooking the listener's attention.

One of the most moving pieces is George "Little Hat" Jones' 1929 "Bye Bye Baby Blues," on Volume One of this series. Jones' nasal, emotive vocal and gentle fingerstyle guitar transform the familiar lyrical scenario, evident in the song's title, into a masterpiece of American folk music.

Lottie Kimbrough and Winston Holmes' "Wayward Girl Blues," also on Volume One, best illustrates the subtext of this set: black and white musicians sharing material and performing together. The rapport between black singer Kimbrough and white guitarist Holmes is extremely touching and creates an unforgettable, emotionally charged piece. The song's melody is similar to Blind Willie McTell's 1933 performance of "East

St. Louis Blues (Fare You Well)."

Another collaboration of black and white musicians is "Forked Deer" by Taylor's Kentucky Boys. On this track, black fiddler Jim Booker and white banjoist Marion Underwood seem to be coming from identical musical traditions. Their playing has a masterful drive and precision.

Two pieces by the duo of Joe Evans and Arthur McClain, "Two White Horses in a Line" and "John Henry Blues," further blur the distinction between black and white performance styles. It is genuinely difficult to decide, from repeated hearings of these tunes, whether the performers are Caucasian or Afro-American. In either case, Evans and McClain achieve an effortless, rugged blend of musical customs.

Frank Jenkins' "Roving Cowboy" and Dick Devall's "Tom Sherman's Barroom" are among the most striking Caucasian pieces on the set. Both feature extremely modal, yearning melodies. Devall's piece is sung a capella, with a casual tempo, while Jenkins accompanies himself on fiddle. Their performances are passionate "blue-eyed soul" of the Depression era.

The set's great mystery is Moses Mason's "Molly Man," on Volume Three. According to the liner notes, Mason was a street vendor who sang to advertise his wares. "Molly Man" defies all known musical structures in folk music, verging on the atonal throughout. He seems to sing in a different key from his guitar playing!

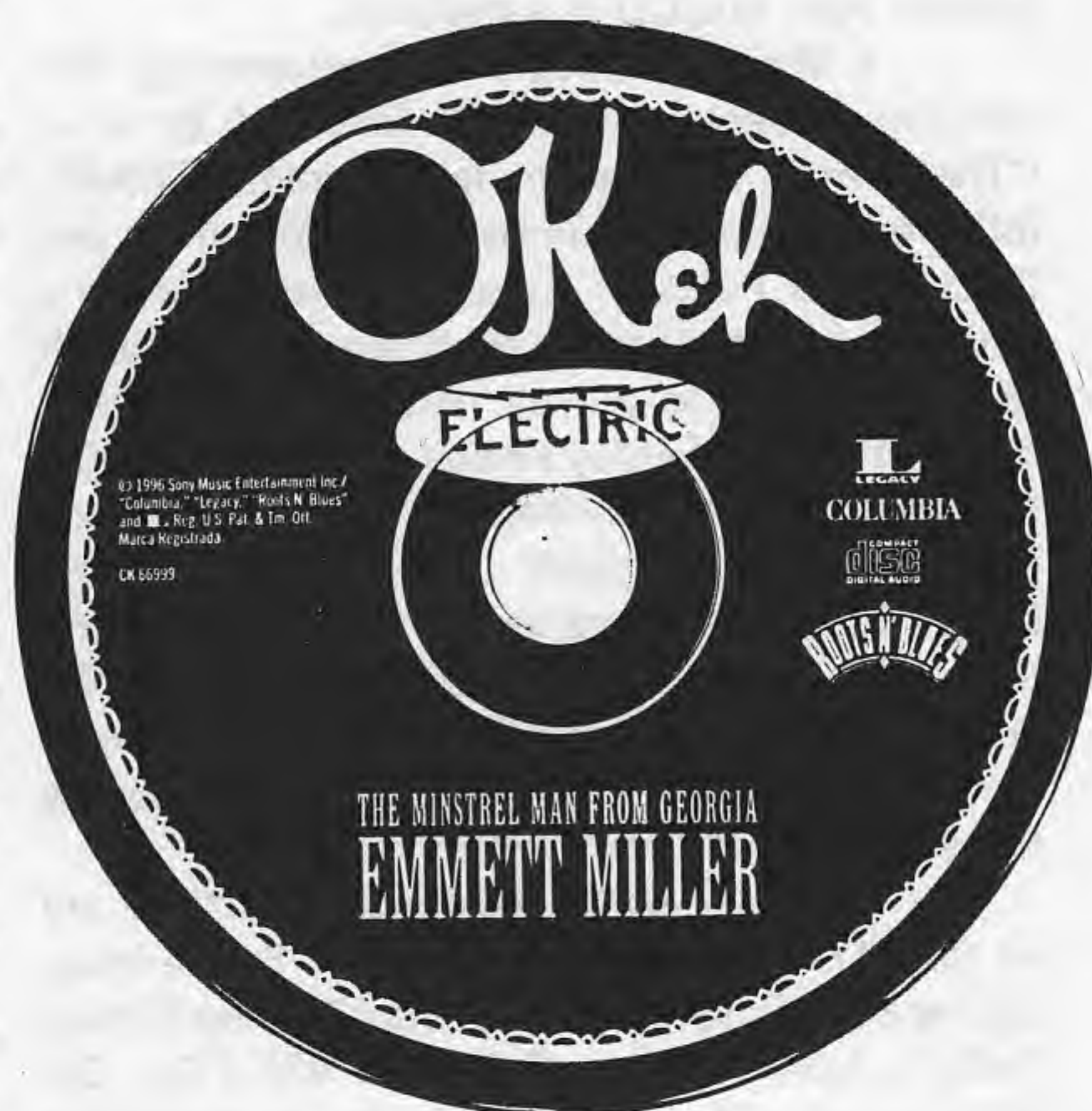
There is rare and welcome music in this set. However, over 20 of its 69 tracks are widely available on other Yazoo and Sony-Columbia Roots 'n' Blues CDs. Yazoo recycles too many tracks! Since this series is an overview and selections are chosen to make a point, this may benefit those who are listening to this type of material for the first time. Others, in search of different material, may be dismayed by Before The Blues' over-familiar selections.

Before The Blues' liner-note booklets each share the same interesting but brief six-page overview essay written by Richard Nevins, followed by eight pages of "lite" history on performers. No

dates for recordings are given. It would greatly benefit listeners to have, if nothing else, the date and place each piece was waxed. Would it have been so much trouble for Yazoo's notes to mention, for example, that "House Carpenter" was recorded by Clarence Ashley in Atlanta, Georgia, on April 14, 1930? This would help Yazoo establish that it is serious about preserving history.

Via CD format, Yazoo has steadily improved its presentation. The company's "warts and all" approach to digitizing old 78s has produced an honest, accurate document of these vintage pieces. At its best, Yazoo transfer work compares favorably to John R.T. Davies' work for JSP and Hep.

Before The Blues is a good starting point for discovering and hearing early recorded American folk music. Yazoo's misleading title and packaging for the series may frustrate advanced collectors of 78s, but it may also attract new listeners and encourage the re-issue of more vintage blues and folk recordings.



Emmett Miller: to be reviewed in the next V78!

NEW CD:

Cornet Solos By Pioneer American Recording Artists

Reviewed by Tim Gracyk

This compact disc reissues rare recordings of pre-1906 vintage, 30 titles in all. Here are Berliners, Victor Monarchs, a Clico, a Columbia cylinder, seven-inch Columbia discs, seven-inch Zon-O-Phones. Artists include Walter B. Rogers, Keneke, Kryl, John Dolan, Herbert L. Clarke.

Sound from discs was expertly mastered by Seth B. Winner, with two cylinders mastered by Adrian Costentini. In four cases, I was able to compare the CD with discs in my own collection, and the cornet sound on the CD is more brilliant than on my discs. Most recordings here are so rare that I do hope to acquire many more of these titles in their original format.

These are American recordings though the CD notes hint at a future CD reissuing English cornet virtuosi. For enthusiasts of cornet playing of the turn of the century, which was the instrument's Golden Age, this CD is a godsend.

I like the thoughtful programming: fast selection ("German Sounds") followed by slow ("The Palms"), followed by fast ("Pyramid Polka"), followed by slow ("Narcissus"), followed by fast ("Sea Flower Polka"). Actually, I would prefer a ratio of two fast pieces to every slow one. I relish "King Carnival" as played here by its composer Bohumir Kryl and enjoy similar showy pieces. On the other hand, the less-than-exuberant "Killarney," played here by Herbert L. Clarke, leaves me hungry for a good vocal version. I am convinced that the distinctive voice making the announcement is Calvin G. Child's. This voice announces various 1901 Victor discs, including those of Williams and Walker.

Naturally some spoken introductions are on the CD. I believe it is Charles A. Prince introducing Emil Keneke on Columbia 625 ("Sea Flower Polka"), Jules Levy on Columbia 920 ("Du, Du With Variations"), and Bohumir Kryl on Columbia cylinder 32022 ("Theresa Polka"). A familiar voice

(Edward Meeker's, I am sure) announces Edison cylinder #8036 for Allesandro Liberati, who performs his own "Pyramid Polka."

Six Berliners are interspersed with recordings made a few years later, a wise programming choice. Hearing six Berliners in a row would be too much for most people.

Recording dates are cited, with approximate ones given if exact dates are unknown, as in the case of early Zon-O-Phones.

I was at first puzzled that Bohumir Kryl's Victor recording of "King Carnival" is given the range "Jan.-June 1903" instead of an exact date. Is the date not in Fagan and Moran's Encyclopedic Discography of Victor Recordings? It turns out that the disc used, #2596, is one of those rare non-matrix Victor discs that David Rocco discusses in Issue 6 of V78J. I say non-matrix instead of pre-matrix since this should have a matrix number etched in the run-off area. The disc is not in the Fagan and Moran discography, so an approximate date is cited. But this must be later than June 1903. Consider that it is not announced and the number is 2596. A better guess would be from November 1903 to February 1904.

If a CD of English cornetists is being planned, can one of cornet duets be far behind? This CD focuses on solo cornet work, so not represented are the great duets of Thomas Clark and John Martin (there is confusion over Clark's name in the notes—it is spelled "Cook" on one page and "Clarke" on another, the latter of which matters since Herbert L. Clarke is sometimes credited only as "Clarke" on discs, such as on Clarke and Bellstedt cornet duets). What we have here of Tom Clark may not be truly characteristic since the slow "The Palms" fails to show Clark at his best—he was extraordinary at fast numbers. If an item had to be dropped to make room for a piece showcasing Clark's nimbleness, I nominate

one of the two slow Keneke recordings, either "Hosanna" or "When You Were Sweet Sixteen."

Likewise, I wish the great female cornetist Alice Raymond had been represented not by the dull "Strauss Lullaby" but by something faster, such as "The Swiss Polka" (Berliner 3420), recently taped for me by a friend. Does anyone know the composer of "The Swiss Polka"?

I am grateful that playing speeds are listed. Berliners are played here from 70.51 rpm to 75.13. Zon-O-Phones play at the highest speeds, 80 rpm. Columbias are close to this, with 79.62 cited for a ten-inch disc on which Walter B. Rogers performs "Nearer, My God, To Thee." He plays it in A flat. Musical signatures are noted, which is also impressive. This inclusion of speeds and musical keys sets a healthy precedent. I do notice that, speed-wise, there is an omission. I was sorry that the speed used for the Clico disc is not listed since it could have helped me determine a proper speed for my only Clico disc!

The notes written by Frederick P. Williams are excellent. Mini-biographies are provided for the artists. We learn about career highlights, reputations, birth dates, deaths. Roughly half of these famous artists were indigenous, the others born in Europe (Emil Keneke in Germany; Tom Clark in England; Bohumir Kryl in Bohemia; Jules Levy in England, Allesandro Liberati in Italy). Williams has published widely on military bands and is a true authority on early recordings of this genre. Incidentally, in the June 1996 issue of Hillandale News Williams gives an admirable account of Giuseppe Creatore's career.

The notes state that "the only known recordings" of Albert Bode are from the 1903 period. Mentioned are 12" and 14" Deluxe Victors of February and May, 1903. Worth mentioning is a remarkable Columbia disc from around 1903 featuring Bode: "Swiss Fantasia" (1077), a trumpet solo with band. The announcement is amusing since the announcer shouts, "TRUMPET SOLO, SWISS FANTASIE, PLAYED BY ALBERT BODE, WITH COLUMBIA BAND!" The enthusiasm makes the listener jump. It sounds like

Charles A. Prince. Someone must have urged him to soften his voice for subsequent announcements. No other Prince opening is like this. Columbia stopped announcements around mid-1904.

Order the CD while you can. One cannot step into a shop, no matter how well-stocked, to buy this. It may be purchased only by ordering an issue of the International Trumpet Guild Journal (Volume 19, Number 4--a special cornet issue). The CD comes free with the 112-page journal. The combination of journal with CD (and a reprint of the August 1888 issue of Trumpet Notes!) will not be available forever. At \$15, this is a bargain.

For a postpaid copy of Cornet Solos By Pioneer American Recording Artists (ITG 004) and the accompanying ITG Journal (Vol. 19. No. 4), send \$15 to Bryan Goff, ITG Treasurer, School of Music, Florida State University, Tallahassee FL 32306-2098. Make checks out to International Trumpet Guild.



A brilliant performance reissued on the CD. This Victor disc is unusual in that the recording is from late 1903 or early 1904 (too late to be "pre-matrix") but no matrix number is etched in the run-off area.

NEW CDs: The Columbia House Bands

Fred Rich: Volume One (The Old Masters 101)

Ben Selvin: Volume One (The Old Masters 102)

Of many things to like about these two CDs, their chief strength is sound quality—remarkable! Engineer George Morrow evidently went the extra mile when working with the original Columbia 78s. If all CD companies were as successful in reissuing material, we could stop searching for clean copies of the originals.

The CDs are sold separately but I review them together here because of similarities. The Fred Rich material dates from April 1929 to late 1930, the Ben Selvin from February 1930 to March 1932. Columbia looked to Rich and Selvin for tasteful versions of popular tunes, for recordings with wide appeal. This is commercial dance music, no doubt about it. And it is wonderful.

Though decidedly commercial, no performance here was an actual top-seller. At least I have not seen multiple copies of the 78s. The best-known tunes on the CDs are "Body and Soul" (performed here by a Fred Rich ensemble—one of the song's earliest recorded versions) and "Happy Days Are Here Again." The latter song would be adopted, in 1932, for FDR's presidential campaign, but it was not Selvin's version on Columbia 2116-D that popularized it. A bigger hit was Leo Reisman's version on Victor 22221, recorded in November 1929. Some have claimed that the song was written to cheer Americans hit by a Depression, but the song pre-dates the '29 Crash.

Selvin and Rich had hits during their long careers, with Selvin's 1919 Victor recording of "Dardanella" being one of the best sellers of the acoustic era, and Rich enjoying hits even as a composer, such as with his 1926 "I'm Just Wild About Animal Crackers" (written with Sam Coslow and Harry Link). Selvin is remembered today not for specific recordings but for quantity. I am skeptical when writers cite numbers without indicating sources—one recently published book speaks of 9,000 Selvin recordings—but the January 1924 issue of The Talking Machine World does

celebrate Selvin's one-thousandth record. Working mostly for Vocalion at that time, he was 25 years old and had many more sessions ahead of him.

I presume these early Depression era performances are reissued not because they were influential or historically significant—rather, because this music is too good to be ignored. Anyone who enjoys the late '20s work of Paul Whiteman and Nat Shilkret should find this music appealing. The influence of Whiteman's Rhythm boys is evident in the harmonies of Rich's vocal group the Rollickers.

The two bandleaders employed great musicians—Benny Goodman, the Dorseys, Joe Venuti, Eddie Lang, Joe Tarto. Vocalists for Selvin include Dick Robertson, Kate Smith, and Jack Miller. Vocalists for Rich include the Rollickers (who were the Rollickers?) and Smith Ballew.

Informed CD notes are by Rob Bamberger. Basic discographic information is provided for each number—matrix, date of session, original disc number. I wish composers had been noted, which is information easily taken from original discs.

This is Columbia material as reissued by a small company, The Old Masters. Columbia/Sony has not seemed interested in reissuing such music. Is Columbia material better in the hands of others? We can compare sound with one selection since Columbia did reissue Rich's "He's So Unusual" on its Can't Help Lovin' That Man (CK 52855), a CD of love songs sung by men seemingly directed at men (lyrics are sung as copyrighted, not adjusted for gender—Irving Kaufman sings "The Man I Love," Billy Murray sings "He's A Good Man To Have Around"). TOM's sound is brighter, more forward.

I look forward to more TOM CDs. It will take many more CDs of this type of music and this sound quality before we reach saturation.

For either CD (postpaid), send \$17.95 to P&L Antiques, 727 Sutter St., Folsom CA 95630. California residents must add 7.25% state tax.

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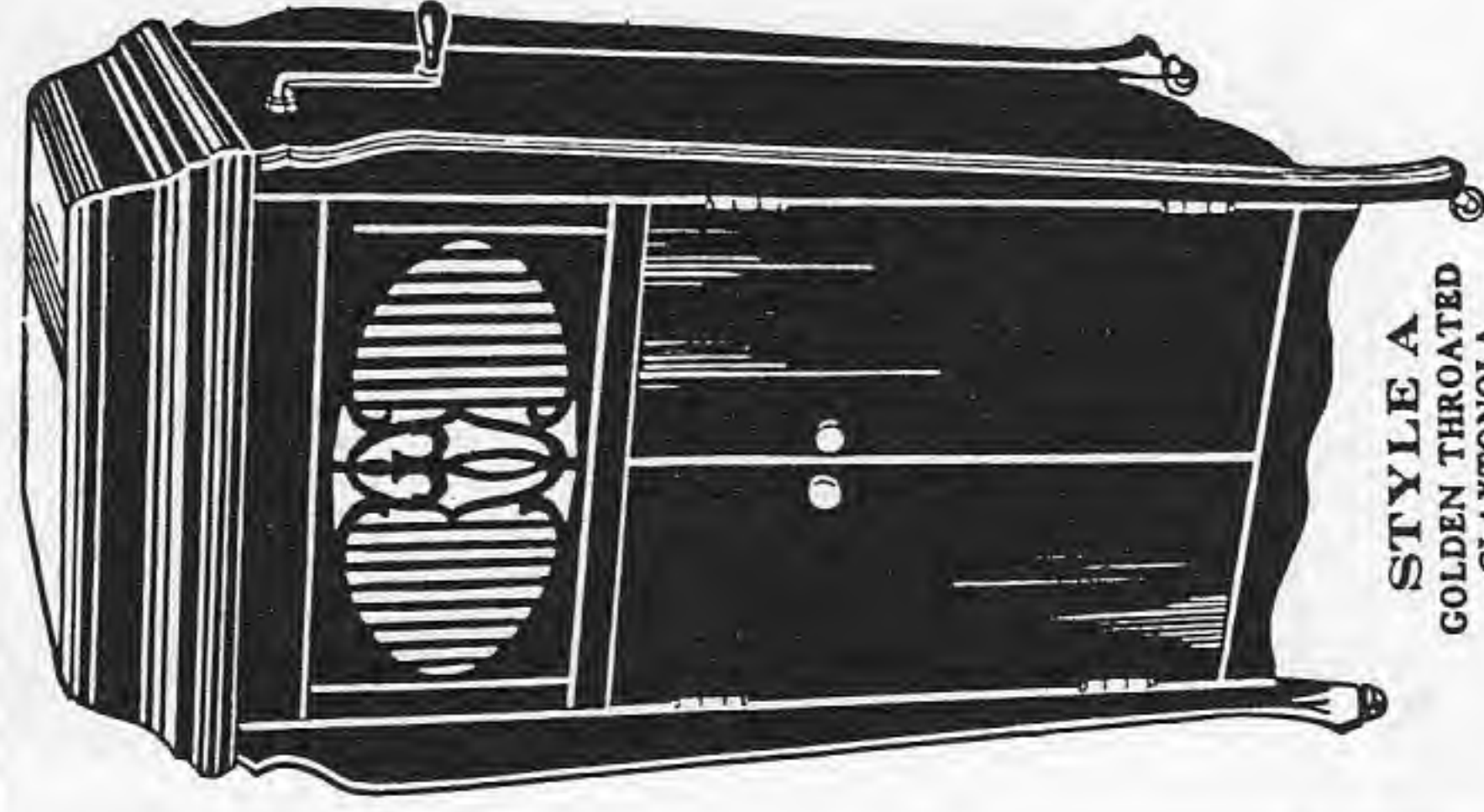
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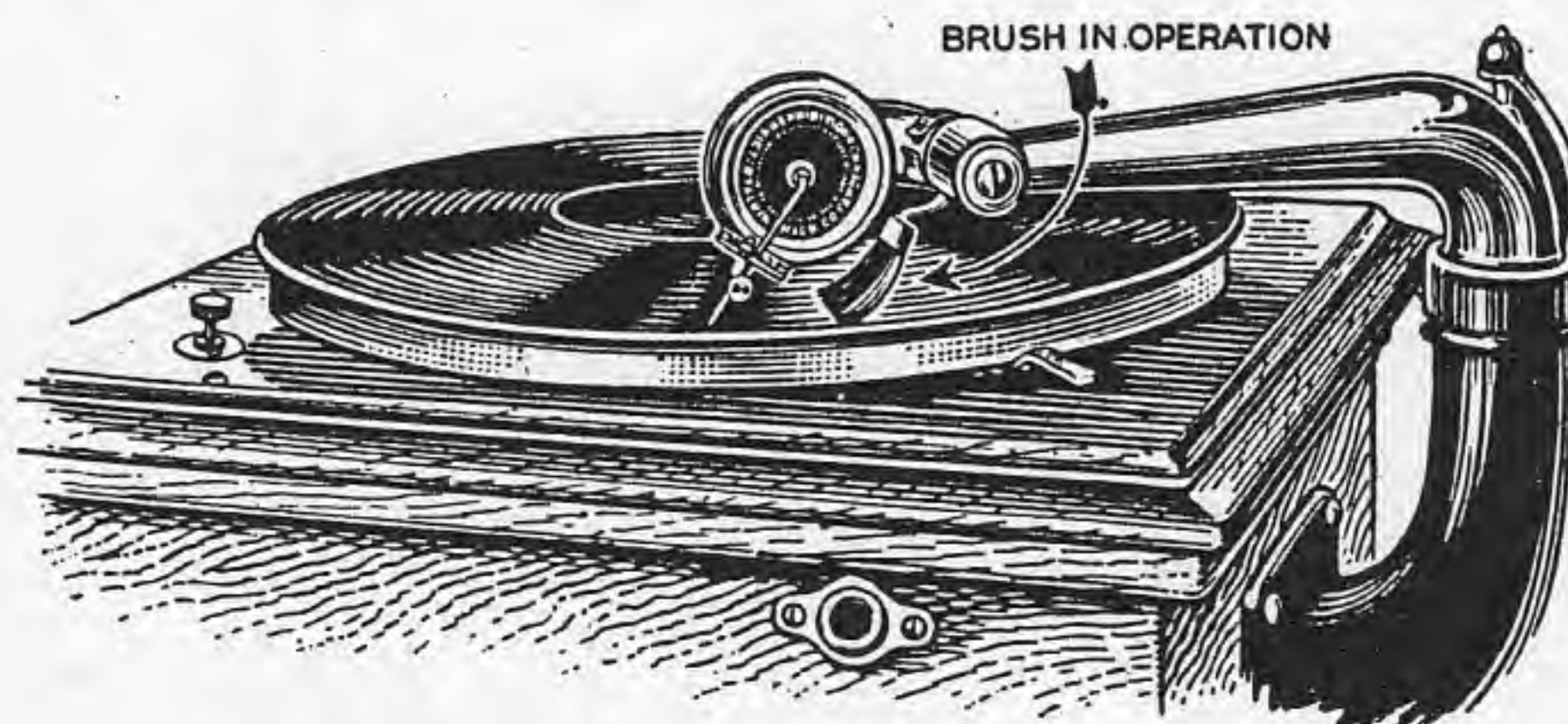
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